

LONDON^{THE} READER

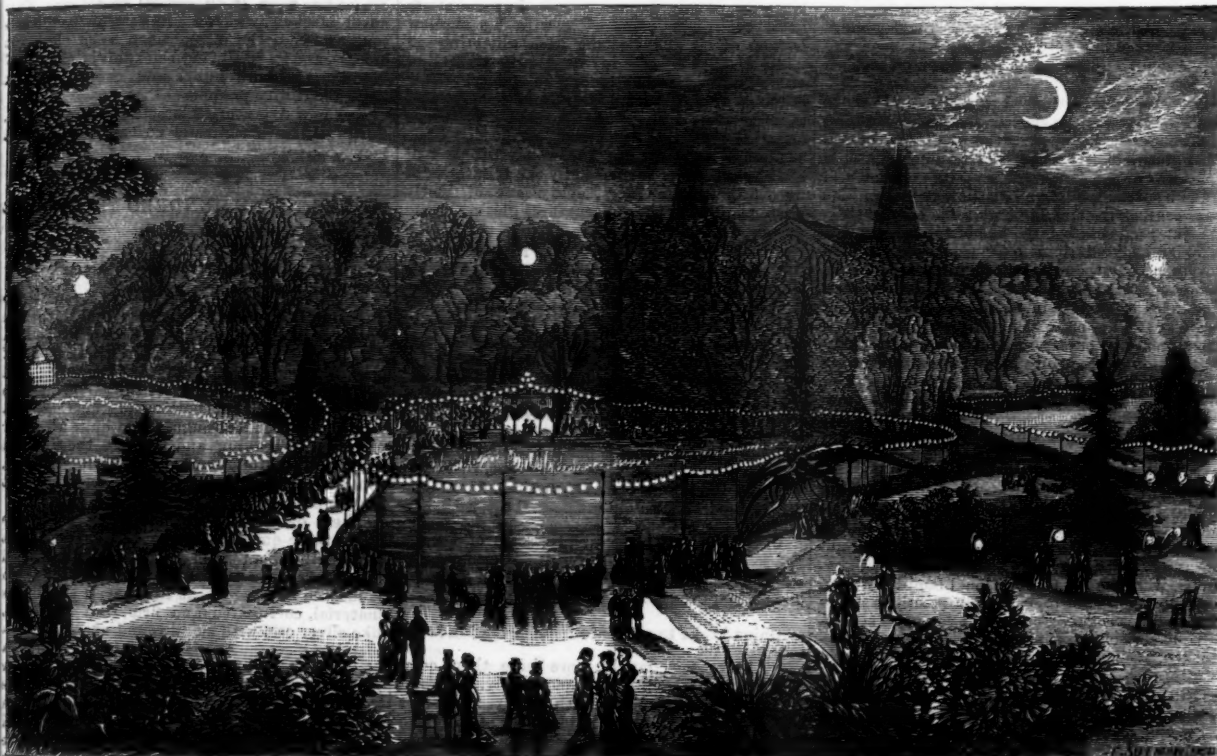
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE ILLUMINATION OF THE TRIPLE LAKES AT THE ALEXANDRA PALACE.]

ILLUMINATED RECREATION-PLACES OF THE PEOPLE.

A GENERAL paper on the people's out-door recreations would embrace too many dissimilar sights, exercises and entertainments to be comprised within the space of a single article of the well-filled columns of the LONDON READER; we therefore propose in the present contribution to take a glance at the past and chronicle the present state of the art of embellishing the public gardens of the metropolitan suburbs.

In the last century and the beginning of the present, ere the mighty world of brick and mortar had embraced, like the tentacles of some monstrous octopus, almost every field, green lane, park, garden, pleasance, common, and open space within what the present generation know as "the inner circle" of modern Babylon, the northern as well as the southern suburbs of London abounded with public gardens. Passing over aristocratic Ranelagh and Marylebone Fields, with its concerts under the celebrated Dr. Arne, both of which were built over before 1800, we come to Sadler's Music House (now Sadler's Wells Theatre), Merlin's Cave, the London Spa (Spafields), Chad's Well (King's Cross), Bagnigge Wells, White Conduit House, Copenhagen House, and Highbury Barn, all covered with streets and terraces, yet within the memory of the writer

(who is more than a septuagenarian) all "gardens" where the denizens of London crowded to hear music of questionable merit, and indulged in refreshments suitable to the pockets and digestions of their several classes of patrons. This was the flourishing period of "tea-gardens," as is the present of "music-halls," and the places here briefly enumerated on the north-western and northern side of London had their counterparts on the southern and western sides. They now exist only in memory, their sites being built over and in almost every instance the name only being preserved by a modern public-house or gin-palace on the spot where once the spruce citizen and "dweller long in populous city pent" took tea and shrimps, ale and biscuits, or listened to such poor musical entertainment as an organ in the "assembly-room" might supply; while the amusements of bowls, skittles, Dutch pins, and "knock-'em-downs" afforded recreation to those who affected more violent exercises than promenading or "sporting a toe" on the dancing platform.

It may surprise many of the dwellers in these suburbs to hear that quite within the memory of the writer the tract of land from the back of the British Museum, by St. Pancras, Somers Town, Camden Town, thence to Kentish Town, and Highgate, led the pedestrian by field-paths, bridle ways and hedge-skirted lanes, through a country dotted with the seats of the wealthy, and sprinkled with dairy farmhouses. On the left hand was the Yorkshire Stingo tea-gardens and bowling-green, near to Lisson Grove (not then a *lucus a non lucendo*), whereto—we copy an advertisement—"The visitor is admitted on payment of sixpence for a ticket, to receive the value in refreshments." At "Kilburn Wells,"

too, on the road to Edgware, "The gardens have been greatly improved, the large room being particularly adapted for the reception of the politest company for music, dancing, and other entertainments." But we must return from this digression, and get on a more direct road to the northern heights, whence Hampstead, Highgate, Hornsey, and the modern Alexandra Palace look down on London town. Yet we must pause to note that on these eminences, at the "Spaniards," "Jack Straw's Castle," and a few other taverns, relics of the olden tea-gardens survive in arbours, greens, and groves, mostly of shrunken proportions, from the encroachments of the speculative builder and an ever-increasing population.

"Other times other manners." The humble amusements of the citizen in the trellised arbour bordering the shaven bowling-green, the trim gravelled walk with its dribbling fountain and shallow basin containing gold and silver fish, its grotto of shells and fragments of coloured glass, its tea and shrimps, or ale and biscuits, passed away; but another class of garden survived to a more recent day in the once-renowned Vauxhall and Cremorne, of which the North Woolwich Gardens is the only living representative. The sites on which these stood are now also covered with streets and houses. London, which William Cobbett in his day nicknamed "The Wen," because it was, in the elder Weller's phrase, "swelling visibly," has for the last three decades been turning itself inside out; pulling down the dwellings within and expelling the former inhabitants till the excluded people, whose homes are replaced by lofty and palatial banks, insurance offices, railway termini, five and seven-storied warehouses, spacious counting-houses, and vast mercantile establishments,

inhabited only in business hours, have migrated "over the border." Here they have mingled with the ever-advancing influx from the provinces, swelled by the abnormal increase of population, and crowded the whole of what Dr. Johnson would have called "a reticulation of streets, decussated by minute interspaces," until they have left to the "four million" but two "gardens" worthy of the name—one the Italian terraced slope of the Sydenham Hill, with its crystal conservatory crowning the memory of that "grand old gardener," Sir Joseph Paxton; the other, the spacious "People's Playground," named after our future Queen, seated on the Northern Heights, which look down on modern Babylon.

Here we have indeed "scope and verge enough" for various sports. We pass, therefore, the concerts, the operas, the dramatic, equestrian, magical and other entertainments within the walls of the Palace; it is of its peculiar and unique surroundings we have now to speak. Its race-course, its trotting-track, its bicycle-ring, its jumping enclosure for horses, its cricket-field and gymnasium offer themselves to the lovers of sport and healthful exercise. It is, however, to its incomparable sylvan features, enhanced by taste and art, that we now direct the attention of enjoyment-seekers. For several years, and we confess ourselves among the number of the ignorant, we knew not of the stately "Grove" which covers the lofty mound at the north-west corner of the park, towards Muswell Hill, with its grand chestnuts, elms, beeches and oaks, and the pleached walks, wherewith are associated the memories of the wealthy Thralls, the celebrated Mrs. Piousi (Mrs. Thrale), and the literary Leviathan of his age, the "burly Dr. Samuel Johnson, the rude moralist." Here are woodland beauties which have recently been made a popular attraction by "glow-worm lamp-lighting," after the fashion of the olden Vauxhall with "the 30,000 additional lamps," whereon "Punch" used to base such facetious statistical calculations. For several years the successive lessees of the Alexandra seem to have overlooked, neglected and ignored what we now venture to pronounce the most beautiful and rural portions of the park. It remained for Messrs. Jones and Barber to bring forward this unrivalled al fresco successor to our old illuminated pleasure-grounds, and to utilise it for the enjoyment and the healthful delight of visitors. Here, on the few fine Wednesday nights of our too-short summer, emanating from an illuminated orchestra (the counterpart in some respects of the Vauxhall of our boyhood, wherein Robinson, of "Pretty Jane" celebrity, with Miss Tunstall sang "Pretty Polly Hopkins"), we have lately listened to a well-selected Baden Baden concert, seated on the cool grass or a cane-bottomed chair, like Tityrus "sub tegmine fagi." Yet even this, and ourselves so seated, would not have tempted us to draw a "counterpart presentment" of the scene we have chosen for the subject of the engraving which heads the present gossiping article. No, indeed! However, as we keep no secrets from our readers, we will just tell them how this came about.

Spelling over sundry placards—we derive much information from our mural literature while waiting on railway platforms and loitering, we love loitering, along the streets—we came upon one headed "Alexandra Palace," wherein we read, inter alia, "Illumination of the Triple Lakes." Triple lakes? Where are they? We thought we knew the Alexandra Palace by heart. Triple Lakes? Why, what have they done with the big picture of the Spanish Armada, and its final "blow up"? So away we went to see. "Out at the west or the north door, sir, turn to your left through the high-level railway arch, and on the right hand of the broad road," &c., &c., said a programme-selling attendant. We felt we were on a journey to a terra incognita, but were entirely unprepared for what met our eye. Advancing towards the railway arch aforesaid we found it a sort of portal to the fairy scene beyond, prettily patterned with the old-fashioned glass cup lamps in ruby, amber, white and green, tracing the architectural outline of the bridge; to the right extended a

long line of Chinese lanterns, while the trees and shrubs on the slope were prettily sprinkled with coloured lamps. On the left hand there burst upon us the picture which we have here attempted to portray, so far as mere black and white can convey an idea of what Mr. Whistler might describe as "an arrangement in every colour of the rainbow." Three pellucid lakes, fringed with grass and bordered with reeds, ferns and aquatic plants mirrored in their bosoms not only ten thousand festooned lanterns of gay Japanese tints, but countless little cut glass cups, each with its shallow bottom of oil and floating wick glittering in "self and shadow" in the gently trembling water below. Above these in misty, silver radiance shone three of the latest triumphs of illuminative science in the shape of three electric lights, each tempered by a ground glass shade and globe. But the wonderful part of the spectacle was furnished by the thousands of upturned human faces, every one distinctly photographed by the supernatural gleam. These crowds were clustered on the rising mounds on the further side of the lakes opposite to the illuminated orchestra, whence sundry popular singers gave songs, ballads, duets and choruses. The sight was as novel as it was surprising, and as the strains of an excellent band came over the water and among the umbrageous trees, and the features of a thousand listeners assumed a merry expression at the snip-snap music of the market chorus in *La Fille de Madame Angot*, we felt the dancing influence come over ourselves at Lecocq's lilting music. Then we looked again at the paper lanterns, bobbing, swinging and jumping, as we thought, in dance-time to the merry tune. Anon we found ourselves humming an old music-hall ditty.

Ching-a-ring, ring ching! Feast of Lanterns!

What a lot of chopsticks, hongs and gongs. Did you ever see things, parasols and tea-things,

China broke to pieces to furnish the fun?

But there was much more here than even "China broke to pieces" could supply. Beyond the prettiest woodland with picturesque trees and shrubs, and the combination of the two oldest and most effective of illuminations, the introduction of the new light among foliage and its effect upon the green carpet of close-shaven turf was a new pleasure—a thing for which the silly Persian king offered a large reward. If anyone doubts the picture we have here drawn with pencil and pen, let him go to the foot of Muswell Hill and see, hear and judge for himself.

NEW SERIAL STORY.

In our Next Week's issue of the *LONDON READER* will appear the commencement of a very powerful and entrancing Novel specially prepared for us by an author of high repute and eminent constructive talent.

Our numerous friends would confer upon us a great favour by disseminating this fact, together with their personal recommendations, as widely as possible, in order that New Subscribers may take the opportunity to become acquainted with (and as we hope continue to be constant readers of) our paper—acknowledged to be the best as it is the largest of its kind in existence.

It is said that a tree, called by the natives Tamaicapi, or the rain tree, has been discovered in Peru. It grows to the height of 70 feet, and the top is 130 feet in diameter. This tree absorbs and condenses the humidity of the atmosphere in such a manner that the moisture is continually seen dropping down its trunk and falling in showers from the leaves. The perpetual dripping has converted the land around into a sort of morass.

PEOPLE who are only acquainted with skate

in a crimped state as bought at a fishmonger's shop, are perhaps seldom aware of the dimensions to which that ugly denizen of the deep sometimes attains. A skate caught recently at Grimsby weighed no less than 14 stone, and measured 15 feet 10 inches across the back, and 7 feet 7 inches from nose to tail. It was sold for fourteen shillings.

The sweetest thing in mourning has just been introduced from Russia. It is a black silk Jersey elaborately beaded with jet. The Princess of Wales has worn it on several occasions. This novel garment, which fits like a glove to the person, produces the effect when worn of a jet cuirass, and its glittering blackness is extremely becoming to both figure and complexion. It costs about fifty pounds.

The new Atlantic cable between Land's End, Cornwall, and America is now an accomplished fact.

WORMS THREE HUNDRED FEET UNDER GROUND.

THE Gold Hill (Nevada) "News" reports the discovery of a queer species of worms in the case of the Lord Lorne mine, near Lower Gold Hill. The worms appear in a solid stratum of soft clay, 700 feet from the mouth of the tunnel, and 300 feet below the surface of the earth, amidst the vein matter of that portion of the Comstock. Superintendent McDougal found quite a number of them by soaking and washing the clay, and they are no defunct relics of antediluvian time, but are all alive and kicking, incredible as it may appear.

These queer little subterranean worms are about three-quarters of an inch long by about an eighth of an inch in diameter, short and thick, resembling some species of grub. Each is incased in a very neat little shell of siliceous material, corrugated and firm, of a bluish cast, like silver ore, with small round spots, having a metallic lustre. At his forward end appears a vicious-looking little head, and six legs or feelers capable of being easily folded when he draws back into his shell. On top of his head is a small helmet or cover, of the same material as the shell, so that when he hauls in for a reason or self-protection his top-piece or helmet just closes the hole nicely. Why this hard shell covering or protective armour, or how it is that these very peculiar worms are found alive at such a depth in virgin ground, is not easy of explanation. Their presence can be accounted for on the score of some deep crack or disturbance of the earth at some time, yet what they are doing there and what supports them is a mystery, for the clay is no way rich, though it is wormy. They certainly are a great natural curiosity.

PIN-MAKING MACHINES.

THE great beauty of Wright's machine, which is now very generally in use, is that it takes the ordinary wire in hand and performs on it the whole operation of pin-making and finishing without any extraneous discretionary assistance. This machine is indeed one of the closest approaches that mechanics have made to the dexterity of the human hand. It is not much larger than a lady's sewing machine. In factories it is so arranged, together with many others, that it may be driven by belting in the ordinary way.

On the left side of the machine hangs on a peg a small reel of wire that has been straightened by running through a compound system of small rollers. The wire descends and the end of it enters the machine. It pulls it in and bites it off by inches incessantly. Just as it seizes each bite a little hammer with a concave face hits the end of the wire three taps, and "upsets" it to a head, while it grips it in a counter-sunk hole between its teeth. With an outward thrust of its tongue it then lays the pin side-

ways in a wheel that the external pins roll in under two series. These files points of levers, and lightning," dropped into. In addition also a number of construction. The first are lengths, and pricks them they are bowed the pin by a form through row on the the exact spot. Under them hand-like part from each of movement as gated ridges folded, after

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A P

The closed lid Upon the bed Who was, and

SIX MARMALADE

They have a room, but to a portions and from some generation infant Knollys sorrow, and a grim fight for and birth-right great conquerors. There he will of his household estate, and all by two and the the report how his still white. In the midst of calumny, saying wrongs which he of that stern rec by a greater than Doctor Gwynne moved, but whose Cathcart, who is kinder sorrow than feel—and the quail together.

In the midst of three men is remembrance that one of

ways in a little groove across the rim of a small wheel that slowly revolves just beneath it. By the external pressure of a stationary hoop these pins roll in their places, as they are carried under two series of small files, two in each. These files grow fine towards the end of the series. They lie at a slight inclination on the points of the pins, and by a series of cams, levers, and springs are made to play "like lightning." Thus the pins are pointed and dropped into a box in a little shower.

In addition to this machine, all factories use also a number of automata of a very ingenious construction for assorting and papering the pins. The first arrange them in half a dozen different lengths, and reject all crooked pins; the last pricks them into papers in the way in which they are bought. The papering machine hangs the pin by the pin's head in an inclined platform through as many slots as there are in a row on the papers. These slots converge into the exact space, spanning the length of a row. Under them runs the strip of pin-paper. A hand-like part of the machine catches one pin from each of the slots as it falls, and by one movement sticks them all through two corrugated ridges in the paper. The papers are then folded, after which they are ready for sale.

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XLII.

The room is dim;
The closed blinds tell of mourning. Stark and grim
Upon the bed lies the form of him
Who was, and is, but never more shall be.

SIR MARMADUKE KNOLLYS is indeed dead. They have carried him, not to his own bedroom, but to a distant chamber, vast in its proportions and funeral in its aspect. There, for some generations, when it could be so arranged, infant Knollyses came wailing into a world of sorrow, and dying Knollyses fought their last grim fight for the retention of house and lands and birth-right ere they were vanquished by the great conqueror—Death.

There he will lie in state, whilst the members of his household, the stolid farmers upon his estate, and all the old crones from the village go by twos and threes to gaze at him, attracted by the report how calm and grand he looks, that his still white lips appear to smile, and that the runes of passion and pain and sin and suffering, which the years traced upon his marred visage, have in a few hours been almost entirely effaced.

In other respects the process of effacement is already at work. "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" is a maxim which has its origin in one of those generous instincts common to us all, miserable sinners though we be.

Few of us care to vilify the dead, no matter how great our wrongs. We shrink from breaking the awful silence of the tomb by wrathful railing or vituperative clamour.

Hatred closes its long account, vengeance sheaths its sword, when the tidings are brought to us that our enemy is dead.

In the shock of his foe's demise, even Sir Blunt behaves like a man stunned by sudden calamity, saying not a word respecting the wrongs which he came to redress, or the nature of that stern reckoning which was anticipated by a Greater than he.

Doctor Gwynne, who has been hastily summoned, but whose skill can avail nothing—Colin Cathcart, who is moved by the sad event to deeper sorrow than he might have expected to feel—and the quondam gold-digger leave The Hall together.

In the midst of his grief the youngest of the three men is remembering with restless impatience that one of his companions can probably

supply what is missing in that chain of evidence he has been trying, Link by Link, to complete.

The long avenue seems interminable as they walk along. He begins to ask himself why he should not trust Doctor Gwynne, who has proved so staunch and true a friend to him, with all the sad secrets of his life. The suspense becomes intolerable, and he hastily resolves to end it.

"Mr. Blunt," he says, in tones which tremble with deep emotion, "Mr. Blunt, I think you were living in Astonburne about five-and-twenty years ago, your occupation being that of a lead miner."

"That's so," answers Sir Blunt, gruffly.

"I am about to ask you, in the presence of my most discreet and trusty friend," continues Colin, with growing agitation, "a few questions which spring from a deeper motive than impertinent curiosity. Did you leave Astonburne secretly one night in company with a young woman named Selina Harvey?"

To a dead halt in the centre of the dark avenue, as though an invisible hand had suddenly arrested his progress, comes Mr. Sir Blunt.

"Yes, I did," he answers, sharply. "What's that to you, young man?"

"Did you marry her and desert her all within a few days?"

"What the blazes are ye drivin' at? What is it you want to know? What's become of her? Is she alive? Where is she?" cries the gold-digger, pouring out his questions with excitement greater than that of his interrogator, whilst Doctor Gwynne listens wonderingly.

"I do not know. Her fate is a mystery upon which I had hoped you might throw some light. Did you marry her, Mr. Blunt?"

"What the blazes business is it o' yours, durn ye?" growls the other, wrathfully.

"Merely this," answers Colin, with quiet dignity, "I am Selina Harvey's son."

"Har son! Selina Harvey's son! Let's look at you, lad."

"A difficult matter in the darkness," begins Colin.

But Mr. Blunt has taken a lucifer match from his waistcoat pocket, and he draws it sharply across the sleeve of his coat.

There is not a breath of wind stirring in that sheltered spot to extinguish the feeble flame. Close to Colin's face the gold-digger thrusts the match, casting upon it a faint blue glare.

"It's true, by the holy poker, it's true," he mutters, under his breath. "I must ha' been the dundest fool not to see the likeness before."

"I am aware that whether you married her or not you are not my father. I know that you left England shortly after the—elopement from this village, whilst my mother and some gentleman went to live in London lodgings and remained there till I was born, twelve months afterwards. That is about the extent of my positive information. I want to know whether, when you and Selina Harvey left Astonburne, you married her."

"No such luck. Doves like her don't mate with rough birds like me. But I see her married, sir, and took care there shouldn't be no humbug or joleechin'; that was the last and the best I could do for the girl as I loved so strong and tender and true—I see her married."

"Thank God!" cries Colin, fervently. "To whom?"

"To Master Duke, as was then when his uncle was alive; Sir Marmadock as is now—leastwise, to him as was Sir Marmadock two hours ago, and is now a lump of clay."

"But Sir Marmadock married the present Lady Knollys within six months of his uncle's death and his consequent accession to the title and the property," objects Doctor Gwynne, anxiously. "I forget the year, but I think it was fifty-five. I have all the dates at home."

"I was born in fifty-five," says Colin.

"And the wedding took place in fifty-four," growls Mr. Blunt.

"The inference is too plain, I fear. My poor mother must have died suddenly, by an accident or otherwise, at the very time my father was

trying to persuade her the marriage was informal. She left her babe in the London lodgings, and came to Astonburne to implore her boy's father to do justice to mother and child. She has never since been heard of—she disappeared as though the earth had swallowed her."

An exclamation of incredulous horror from Doctor Gwynne.

"What is the matter?" cries Colin.

"Nothing—nothing," answers the doctor, hastily. "Mr. Blunt, can you remember whether the lady of whom we are speaking, Colin's mother, was in the habit of wearing any kind of jewellery which Sir Marmadock might have given her?"

"I don't remember nothin' (she weren't fond of trinkets, my poor lass weren't)," says Mr. Blunt, musingly, "exceptin' a big, ugly ring as Muster Duke once give her. It were a man's ring, to seal letters with, not a woman's; and it had got a shield and furrin' words upon it. I think 'twas for the words Selina liked it. She once explained to me as Muster Duke had said they meant that when two folks had one heart between 'em they pulled together like, and not two different ways."

"Could you identify that ring if you saw it again?"

"In course. In course I could, sartain sure. A big gold man's ring, as looked out o' place on her little hand."

"Come along—come along," cries the doctor, eagerly, as though the excitement which had settled in turn upon his companions was beginning to communicate itself to him. "Come to my house. I think I can both show you the ring and clear up the secret of the poor girl's fate."

"Is she dead? Tell me that," implores Mr. Blunt, as they hurry towards the lodge gates.

"Yes; she died at the time of her disappearance probably; when Colin was a babe."

He declines to say more, and the conversation is fitful and irregular until they reach his house. He conducts them to the surgery, and unlocking a bureau takes a docketed envelope from a pigeon-hole and tears it open.

"Is this the ring in question?"

"That's it," assents Sir Blunt. "I couldn't mistake it, you see. It's so peccoliar altogether."

"Read the inscription upon the envelope," says the doctor to Colin; and the young man obeys.

"Removed from the finger of the female skeleton I found at the bottom of the abandoned lead mine the night Colin fell down it. Recognised by Sir Marmadock Knollys as one he had given to some poor girl—name unknown to me—whom he had deceived. Inference, that she committed suicide."

"Infrance be danged!" cries Mr. Blunt. "My poor lass were too good a Christian to commit suicide under any provocation."

"Perhaps she fell down the shaft on a dark night. We had better not build theories we cannot possibly support by evidence," suggests the doctor.

"We have learned enough," says Colin, shuddering at the recollection of Sir Marmadock's hints upon the subject of his mother's death, hints which were obscure at the time, but which now assume a dark and awful significance.

"Quite enough," assents the doctor, holding out his hand. "Let me be the first to congratulate you upon that fact, SIR COLIN KNOLLYS."

"Quite enough," growls the gold-digger. "I were your mother's staunchest friend, lad, faithful to her always, as a dog might be, for the love I bore her. I'll be as true a friend to you if you'll let me, and if you want money for the lawyers to fight madame at The Hall, and that young fop, Chandos, there's a few thousands in bank as ye may have for the askin'. Here's my hand on it too."

"Griffiths and Holt, the family lawyers, are men whose integrity is above reproach," says the doctor, when that all-round hand-shaking is accomplished. "The first thing will be to lay before them the evidence you have Link by Link acquired. I think it will form a chain strong enough to drag them over to your side, Sir Colin,

inhabited only in business hours, have migrated "over the border." Here they have mingled with the ever-advancing influx from the provinces, swelled by the abnormal increase of population, and crowded the whole of what Dr. Jonsson would have called "a reticulation of streets, decussated by minute interspaces," until they have left to the "four million" but two "gardens" worthy of the name—one the Italian terraced slope of the Sydenham Hill, with its crystal conservatory crowning the memory of that "grand old gardener," Sir Joseph Paxton; the other, the spacious "People's Playground," named after our future Queen, seated on the Northern Heights, which look down on modern Babylon.

Here we have indeed "scope and verge enough" for various sports. We pass, therefore, the concerts, the operas, the dramatic, equestrian, magical and other entertainments within the walls of the Palace; it is of its peculiar and unique surroundings we have now to speak. Its race-course, its trotting-track, its bicycle-ring, its jumping enclosure for horses, its cricket-field and gymnasium offer themselves to the lovers of sport and healthful exercise. It is, however, to its incomparable sylvan features, enhanced by taste and art, that we now direct the attention of enjoyment-seekers. For several years, and we confess ourselves among the number of the ignorant, we knew not of the stately "Grove" which covers the lofty mound at the north-west corner of the park, towards Muswell Hill, with its grand chestnuts, elms, beeches and oaks, and the pleached walks, wherewith are associated the memories of the wealthy Thralls, the celebrated Mrs. Piossi (Mrs. Thrale), and the literary Leviathan of his age, the "burly Dr. Samuel Johnson, the rude moralist." Here are woodland beauties which have recently been made a popular attraction by "glow-worm-lamp-lighting," after the fashion of the olden Vauxhall with "the 30,000 additional lamps," whereon "Punch" used to base such facetious statistical calculations. For several years the successive lessees of the Alexandras seem to have overlooked, neglected and ignored what we now venture to pronounce the most beautiful and rural portions of the park. It remained for Messrs. Jones and Harrier to bring forward this unvalued al fresco successor to our old illuminated pleasure-grounds, and to utilise it for the enjoyment and the healthful delight of visitors. Here, on the few fine Wednesday nights of our too-short summer, emanating from an illuminated orchestra (the counterpart in some respects of the Vauxhall of our boyhood, wherein Robinson, of "Pretty Jane" celebrity, with Miss Tunstall sang "Pretty Polly Hopkins"), we have lately listened to a well-selected Baden Baden concert, seated on the cool grass or a cane-bottomed chair, like Tityrus "sub tegmine fagi." Yet even this, and ourselves so seated, would not have tempted us to draw a "counterpart presentment" of the scene we have chosen for the subject of the engraving which heads the present gossiping article. No, indeed! However, as we keep no secrets from our readers, we will just tell them how this came about.

Spelling over sundry placards—we derive much information from our mural literature while waiting on railway platforms and loitering, we love loitering, along the streets—we came upon one headed "Alexandra Palace," wherein we read, inter alia, "Illumination of the Triple Lakes." Triple lakes? Where are they? We thought we knew the Alexandra Palace by heart. Triple Lakes? Why, what have they done with the big picture of the Spanish Armada, and its final "blow up"? So away we went to see. "Out at the west or the north door, sir, turn to your left through the high-level railway arch, and on the right hand of the broad road," &c., &c., said a programme-selling attendant. We felt we were on a journey to a terra incognita, but were entirely unprepared for what met our eye. Advancing towards the railway arch aforesaid we found it a sort of portal to the fairy scene beyond, prettily patterned with the old-fashioned glass cup lamps in ruby, amber, white and green, tracing the architectural outline of the bridge; to the right extended a

long line of Chinese lanterns, while the trees and shrubs on the slope were prettily sprinkled with coloured lamps. On the left hand there burst upon us the picture which we have here attempted to portray, so far as mere black and white can convey an idea of what Mr. Whistler might describe as "an arrangement in every colour of the rainbow." Three pellucid lakes, fringed with grass and bordered with reeds, ferns and aquatic plants mirrored in their bosoms not only ten thousand festooned lanterns of gay Japanese tints, but countless little out glass cups, each with its shallow bottom of oil and floating wick glittering in "self and shadow" in the gently trembling water below. Above these in misty, silver radiance shone three of the latest triumphs of illuminative science in the shape of three electric lights, each tempered by a ground glass shade and globe. But the wonderful part of the spectacle was furnished by the thousands of upturned human faces, every one distinctly photographed by the supernatural gleam. These crowds were clustered on the rising mounds on the further side of the lakes opposite to the illuminated orchestra, whence sundry popular singers gave songs, ballads, duets and choruses. The sight was as novel as it was surprising, and as the strains of an excellent band came over the water and among the umbrageous trees, and the features of a thousand listeners assumed a merry expression at the snip-snup music of the market chorists in La Fille de Madame Angot, we felt the dancing influence come over ourselves at Lecoq's lilting music. Then we looked again at the paper lanterns, bobbing, swinging and jumping, as we thought, in dance-time to the merry tune. Anon we found ourselves humming an old music-hall ditty.

Ching-a-ring, ring ching! Feast of Lanterns!

What a lot of chopsticks, hongs and gongs.
Did you ever see things, parasols and tea-things,
China broke to pieces to furnish the fun?

But there was much more here than even "China broke to pieces" could supply. Beyond the prettiest woodland with picturesque trees and shrubs, and the combination of the two oldest and most effective of illuminations, the introduction of the new light among foliage and its effect upon the green carpet of close-shaven turf was a new pleasure—a thing for which the silly Persian king offered a large reward. If anyone doubts the picture we have here drawn with pencil and pen, let him go to the foot of Muswell Hill and see, hear and judge for himself.

NEW SERIAL STORY.

IN OUR Next Week's issue of the LONDON READER will appear the commencement of a very powerful and entrancing Novel specially prepared for us by an author of high repute and eminent constructive talent.

Our numerous friends would confer upon us a great favour by disseminating this fact, together with their personal recommendations, as widely as possible, in order that New Subscribers may take the opportunity to become acquainted with (and as we hope continue to be constant readers of) our paper—acknowledged to be the best as it is the largest of its kind in existence.

It is said that a tree, called by the natives Tamaicapi, or the rain tree, has been discovered in Peru. It grows to the height of 70 feet, and the top is 130 feet in diameter. This tree absorbs and condenses the humidity of the atmosphere in such a manner that the moisture is continually seen dropping down its trunk and falling in showers from the leaves. The perpetual dripping has converted the land around into a sort of morass.

PEOPLE who are only acquainted with skate

in a crimped state as bought at a fishmonger's shop, are perhaps seldom aware of the dimensions to which that ugly dentition of the deep sometimes attains. A skate caught recently at Grimsby weighed no less than 14 stone, and measured 15 feet 10 inches across the back, and 7 feet 7 inches from nose to tail. It was sold for fourteen shillings.

The sweetest thing in mourning has just been introduced from Russia. It is a black silk Jersey elaborately beaded with jet. The Princess of Wales has worn it on several occasions. This novel garment, which fits like a glove to the person, produces the effect when worn of a jet cuirass, and its glittering blackness is extremely becoming to both figure and complexion. It costs about fifty pounds.

The new Atlantic cable between Land's End, Cornwall, and America is now an accomplished fact.

WORMS THREE HUNDRED FEET UNDER GROUND.

THE Gold Hill (Nevada) "News" reports the discovery of a queer species of worms in the face of the Lord Lorne mine, near Lower Gold Hill. The worms appear in a solid stratum of stiff clay, 700 feet from the mouth of the tunnel, and 800 feet below the surface of the earth, amidst the vein matter of that portion of the Comstock. Superintendent McDougall found quite a number of them by soaking and washing the clay, and they are no disjointed relics of antediluvian times, but are all alive and kicking, incredible as it may appear.

These queer little subterranean worms are about three-quarters of an inch long by about an eighth of an inch in diameter, short and thick, resembling some species of grub. Each is incased in a very neat little shell of silicious material, corrugated and firm, of a bluish cast, like silver ore, with small round spots, having a metallic lustre. At his forward end appears a vicious-looking little head, and six legs or feelers capable of being easily folded when he draws back into his shell. On top of his head is a small helmet or cover, of the same material as the shell, so that when he hatches in for a moment or self-protection his top-piece or helmet just closes the hole nicely. Why this hard snail covering or protective armour, or how it is that these very peculiar worms are found alive at such a depth in virgin ground, is not easy of explanation. Their presence can be accounted for on the score of some deep crack or disturbance of the earth at some time; yet what they are doing there and what supports them is a mystery, for the clay is no way rich, though it is wormy. They certainly are a great natural curiosity.

PIN-MAKING MACHINES.

THE great beauty of Wright's machine, which is now very generally in use, is that it takes the ordinary wire in hand and performs on it the whole operation of pin-making and finishing without any extraneous discretionary assistance. This machine is indeed one of the closest approaches that mechanics have made to the dexterity of the human hand. It is not much larger than a lady's sewing machine. In factories it is so arranged, together with many others, that it may be driven by belting in the ordinary way.

On the left side of the machine hangs on a peg a small reel of wire that has been straightened by running through a compound system of small rollers. The wire descends and the end of it enters the machine. It pulls it in and bites it off by inches incessantly. Just as it seizes each bite a little hammer with a concave face hits the end of the wire three taps, and "up-sets" it to a head, while it grips it in a counter-sunk hole between its teeth. With an outward thrust of its tongue it then lays the pin side-

ways in a little groove across the rim of a small wheel that slowly revolves just beneath it. By the external pressure of a stationary hoop these pins roll in their places, as they are carried under two series of small files, two in each. These files grow fine towards the end of the series. They lie at a slight inclination on the points of the pins, and by a series of cams, levers, and springs are made to play "like lightning." Thus the pins are pointed and dropped into a box in a little shower.

In addition to this machine, all factories use also a number of automata of a very ingenious construction for assorting and papering the pins. The first arrange them in half a dozen different lengths, and reject all crooked pins; the last prints them into papers in the way in which they are bought. The papering machine hangs the pin by the pin's head in an inclined platform through as many slots as there are in a row on the papers. These slots converge into the exact space, spanning the length of a row. Under them runs the strip of pin-paper. A hand-like part of the machine catches one pin from each of the slots as it falls, and by one movement sticks them all through two corrugated ridges in the paper. The papers are then folded, after which they are ready for sale.

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XLII.

The room is dim;
The closed blinds tell of mourning. Stark and grim
Upon the bed lies the form of him
Who was, and is, but never more shall be.

SIR MARMADUKE KNOLLYS is indeed dead.

They have carried him, not to his own bedroom, but to a distant chamber, vast in its proportions and funeral in its aspect. There, for some generations, when it could be so arranged, infant Knollyses came wailing into a world of sorrow, and dying. Knollyses fought their last grim fight for the retention of house and lands and birth-right ere they were vanquished by the great conqueror—Death.

There he will lie in state, whilst the members of his household, the stolid farmers upon his estate, and all the old crones from the village go by twos and threes to gaze at him, attracted by the report how calm and grand he looks, that his still white lips appear to smile, and that the runes of passion and pain and sin and suffering, which the years traced upon his marred visage, have in a few hours been almost entirely effaced.

In other respects the process of effacement is already at work. "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" is a maxim which has its origin in one of those generous instincts common to us all, miserable sinners though we be.

Few of us care to vilify the dead, no matter how great our wrongs. We shrink from breaking the awful silence of the tomb by wrathful railing or vituperative clamour.

Hatred closes its long account, vengeance sheaths its sword, when the tidings are brought to us that our enemy is dead.

In the shock of his foe's demise, even Sir Blunt behaves like a man stunned by sudden calamity, saying not a word respecting the wrongs which he came to redress, or the nature of that stern reckoning which was anticipated by a Greater than he.

Doctor Gwynne, who has been hastily summoned, but whose skill can avail nothing—Colin Cathcart, who is moved by the sad event to keener sorrow than he might have expected to feel—and the quondam gold-digger leave The Hall together.

In the midst of his grief the youngest of the three men is remembering with restless impatience that one of his companions can probably

supply what is missing in that chain of evidence he has been trying, Link by Link, to complete.

The long avenue seems interminable as they walk along. He begins to ask himself why he should not trust Doctor Gwynne, who has proved so staunch and true a friend to him, with all the sad secrets of his life. The suspense becomes intolerable, and he hastily resolves to end it.

"Mr. Blunt," he says, in tones which tremble with deep emotion, "Mr. Blunt, I think you were living in Astonburne about five-and-twenty years ago, your occupation being that of a lead miner."

"That's so," answers Sir Blunt, gruffly.

"I am about to ask you, in the presence of my most discreet and trusty friend," continues Colin, with growing agitation, "a few questions which spring from a deeper motive than impertinent curiosity. Did you leave Astonburne secretly one night in company with a young woman named Selina Harvey?"

To a dead halt in the centre of the dark avenue, as though an invisible hand had suddenly arrested his progress, comes Mr. Sir Blunt.

"Yes, I did," he answers, sharply. "What's that to you, young man?"

"Did you marry her and desert her all within a few days?"

"What the blazes are ye drivin' at? What is it you want to know? What's become of her? Is she alive? Where is she?" cries the gold-digger, pouring out his questions with excitement greater than that of his interrogator, whilst Doctor Gwynne listens wonderingly.

"I do not know. Her fate is a mystery upon which I had hoped you might throw some light. Did you marry her, Mr. Blunt?"

"What the blazes business is it o' yourn, durn ye?" growls the other, wrathfully.

"Merely this," answers Colin, with quiet dignity, "I am Selina Harvey's son."

"Har son! Selina Harvey's son! Let's look at you, lad."

"A difficult matter in the darkness," begins Colin.

But Mr. Blunt has taken a lucifer match from his waistcoat pocket, and he draws it sharply across the sleeve of his coat.

There is not a breath of wind stirring in that sheltered spot to extinguish the feeble flame. Close to Colin's face the gold-digger thrusts the match, casting upon it a faint blue glare.

"It's true, by the holy poker, it's true," he mutters, under his breath. "I must ha' been the durndest fool not to see the likeness before."

"I am aware that whether you married her or not you are not my father. I know that you left England shortly after the elopement from this village, whilst my mother and some gentleman went to live in London lodgings and remained there till I was born, twelve months afterwards. That is about the extent of my positive information. I want to know whether, when you and Selina Harvey left Astonburne, you married her."

"No such luck. Doves like her don't mate with rough birds like me. But I see her married, sir, and took care there shouldn't be no humbug or joleechin'; that was the last and the best I could do for the girl as I loved so strong and tender and true—I see her married."

"Thank God!" cries Colin, fervently. "To whom?"

"To Master Duke, as was then when his uncle was alive; Sir Marmadock as is now—leastwise, to him as was Sir Marmadock two hours ago, and is now a lump of clay."

"But Sir Marmadock married the present Lady Knollys within six months of his uncle's death and his consequent accession to the title and the property," objects Doctor Gwynne, anxiously. "I forget the year, but I think it was fifty-five. I have all the dates at home."

"I was born in fifty-five," says Colin.

"And the weddin' took place in fifty-four," growls Mr. Blunt.

"The inference is too plain, I fear. My poor mother must have died suddenly, by an accident or otherwise, at the very time my father was

trying to persuade her the marriage was informal. She left her babe in the London lodgings, and came to Astonburne to implore her boy's father to do justice to mother and child. She has never since been heard of—she disappeared as though the earth had swallowed her."

An exclamation of incredulous horror from Doctor Gwynne.

"What is the matter?" cries Colin.

"Nothing—nothing," answers the doctor, hastily. "Mr. Blunt, can you remember whether the lady of whom we are speaking, Colin's mother, was in the habit of wearing any kind of jewellery which Sir Marmadock might have given her?"

"I don't remember nothin' (she weren't fond of trinkets, my poor lass weren't)," says Mr. Blunt, musingly, "exceptin' a big, ugly ring as Muster Duke once give her. It were a man's ring, to seal letters with, not a woman's; and it had got a shield and furrin' words upon it. I think 'twas for the words Selina liked it. She once explained to me as Muster Duke had said they meant that when two folks had one heart between 'em they pulled together like, and not two different ways."

"Could you identify that ring if you saw it again?"

"In course. In course I could, sartain sure. A big gold man's ring, as looked out o' place on her little hand."

"Come along—come along," cries the doctor, eagerly, as though the excitement which had settled in turn upon his companions was beginning to communicate itself to him. "Come to my house. I think I can both show you the ring and clear up the secret of the poor girl's fate."

"Is she dead? Tell me that," implores Mr. Blunt, as they hurry towards the lodge gates.

"Yes; she died at the time of her disappearance probably; when Colin was a babe."

He declines to say more, and the conversation is fitful and irregular until they reach his house. He conducts them to the surgery, and unlocking a bureau takes a docketed envelope from a pigeon-hole and tears it open.

"Is this the ring in question?"

"That's it," assents Sir Blunt. "I couldn't mistake it, you see. It's so peccoliar altogether."

"Read the inscription upon the envelope," says the doctor to Colin; and the young man obeys.

"Removed from the finger of the female skeleton I found at the bottom of the abandoned lead mine the night Colin fell down it. Recognised by Sir Marmadock Knollys as one he had given to some poor girl—name unknown to me—whom he had deceived. Inference, that she committed suicide."

"Infrance be danged!" cries Mr. Blunt. "My poor lass were too good a Christian to commit suicide under any provocation."

"Perhaps she fell down the shaft on a dark night. We had better not build theories we cannot possibly support by evidence," suggests the doctor.

"We have learned enough," says Colin, shuddering at the recollection of Sir Marmadock's hints upon the subject of his mother's death, hints which were obscure at the time, but which now assume a dark and awful significance.

"Quite enough," assents the doctor, holding out his hand. "Let me be the first to congratulate you upon that fact, SIR COLIN KNOLLYS."

"Quite enough," growls the gold-digger. "I were your mother's staunchest friend, lad, faithful to her always, as a dog might be, for the love I bore her. I'll be as true a friend to you if you'll let me, and if you want money for the lawyers to fight madame at The Hall, and that young fop, Chandos, there's a few thousands in bank as ye may have for the askin'. Here's my hand on it too."

"Griffiths and Holt, the family lawyers, are men whose integrity is above reproach," says the doctor, when that all-round hand-shaking is accomplished. "The first thing will be to lay before them the evidence you have Link by Link acquired. I think it will form a chain strong enough to drag them over to your side, Sir Colin,

and that your half-brother will see at a glance the hopelessness of resisting your prior claim.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Allies or foes?
Choose quickly, for no middle course avails.

THERE was a time, not so many years ago, when old men who were born in the flint-and-steel and mail-coach era grumbled regretfully that the world was beginning to go by steam. In these days of "Edison" light and "phones" innumerable some of us are beginning to complain that it moves by electricity. By-and-bye, perhaps, when the pioneers of science have got beyond the lobby of Nature's laboratory, we shall begin to be impelled by the "attraction of gravitation," or "solar heat," or "inter-planetary force."

It is not more than twelve hours since Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., was gathered to his fathers, yet Moses Sharp, the lawyer, is in possession of the news, and the cadaverous clerk has hailed a cab which will carry his master to a railway terminus, whence he can take his ticket for the station nearest to Astonburne.

For Moses Sharp is not accustomed, to use his own expression, to "let the grass grow under his feet." He knows that if his fond visions are to be realised, of making a handsome yearly income out of the Knollys estate, he must lose no time in securing Sir Chandos's ratification of the promise concerning parchments and deed boxes, which upon mademoiselle's showing the late baronet had determined perfidiously to ignore.

Mademoiselle's interests would be sacrificed, but that fact does not trouble him. As he is conducted through the great hall, and is informed by the meek footman, who has taken up a card on which is pencilled his obsequious demand to see the heir, that Sir Chandos will be with him shortly, he tells himself mademoiselle must take her chance, that is, if Sir Chandos come to terms in the way that he anticipates.

Being one of those busy bees who never fail to improve the shining hour he draws paper and pencil from his pocket and begins roughly to draft an important conveyance.

Nearly half the "shining hour" creeps by, yet Chandos has not put in an appearance, and Mr. Sharp begins to feel waspish. He thinks of mademoiselle again, and determines to refer her to a firm who will probably take up her case and make a strenuous effort to win it. Sir Chandos will suffer, both in pocket and reputation, and may find himself saddled eventually with a wife he does not want, but there will be rare pickings for his solicitor.

Five and thirty minutes! Mr. Sharp has begun to say angrily that it is really too bad, when Sir Chandos enters, acknowledging his profound bow with a nod of supercilious importance.

"Good morning, Sir Chandos. I have taken the liberty of running down to offer in person my condolences and my congratulations."

"Obliged, I'm sure," says the young man. "Rather out of your usual line, is it not, to waste valuable time in paying visits of politeness that don't carry the customary six and eightpence?"

"I do not despair of the six and eightpence, or its equivalent," replies the lawyer, forcing a smile. "You are doubtless aware, Sir Chandos, that on my last visit Sir Marmaduke announced his intention to transfer all his legal business to my care? It occurred to me that at the present juncture you might like to consult me."

"I should not dream of taking any advice save that of the family lawyers," says Chandos, insolently.

"Such a dream would not be entirely unfamiliar," retorts the solicitor, pointedly, and the young man bites his lip with vexation.

"I wish you good morning," he cries, in curt dismissal, and turns to walk from the room.

"Stop a moment. Let us clearly understand that I am not in the future to act for you, that I may have no hesitation in appearing against you."

"Against me? For whom?"

"For Lady Knollys, your wife," says the lawyer, boldly. "A week ago she begged me to take up her case, but I deferred my reply on the ground that I considered myself retained for you."

"Her claim is preposterous," exclaims Chandos, with white lips.

"On the contrary, it is certain to succeed if I turn over the case to another solicitor and allow him to place me in the witness-box. I have not forgotten the one consultation in which you deigned to come to me for advice, Sir Chandos. The particulars of that interview will tell sadly against you in open court."

"You said they would never, under any circumstances, be divulged."

"Circumstances alter cases. I had not bargained for the cool ingratitude you exhibit to-day. I shall have pleasure in bearing witness against you, both in a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights and in a criminal prosecution, which will give you a taste of prison life, unless—"

"Unless what? Name your conditions of secrecy."

"Unless you redeem Sir Marmaduke's promise and make me the family lawyer. The conditions are by no means onerous, Sir Chandos."

"I accept them," says the young man, with a sigh of relief.

"Perhaps you had better write a note at once from my dictation to Griffiths and Holt. In fact here is a copy which I drew out, never doubting the result of our interview, whilst waiting to see you."

"I wonder they have not driven over before now. I have been expecting them all day."

"Write the note, and I will save you all further trouble in the matter."

So Chandos sits down and pens the following missive:

"SIR CHANDOS KNOLLYS desires that Messrs. Griffiths and Holt will be prepared at their earliest possible convenience to surrender to the keeping of his lawyer, Mr. M. Sharp, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who will in future have the entire control of his legal affairs, all papers, deeds and securities left by his late father in their hands."

"That will do," says Mr. Sharp, gleefully, when the note is safely in his keeping. "I suppose you will like me to remain for a few days and look after your interests when the will is read?"

"My interests will take care of themselves, but I suppose it is the proper thing for you to do," answers Chandos, sulkily.

And Mr. Sharp looks as beamingly content with that ungracious reply as though it were the most courteous invitation words could frame.

(To be Continued.)

HER BITTER FOE;

OR,

A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"

&c., &c.

CHAPTER XX.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

In Cadogan Street no day had ever seemed so long to Ethel as that on which her lover set off for Devreux Court.

Keith left early, that is, before the ladies were down, and so Ethel had not even his company at breakfast.

It had been arranged (in spite of Keith's refusal when the baronet formally invited him) that if Sir Claude showed himself very amiable and very desirous of improving the acquaintance of his future son-in-law that Keith should remain all night at the Court, returning early the following morning.

This had been Lady Jocelyn's idea. She felt there might be many matters for discussion, not least of which if Ethel, as Keith's betrothed, should still remain under his mother's wing, or more fitly return to spend the last days of her maiden life with her father at Devreux Court.

"How very pale you look, child," said the countess to her favourite, as they rose from luncheon.

"I feel so frightened," confessed Ethel.

"Frightened! Surely you do not think your father will quarrel with Keith?"

"I don't know," answered Ethel, leaning her head on Lady Jocelyn's shoulder, "only I was so happy yesterday, and to-day I feel quite wretched."

"Because Keith is not here," suggested Maude, slyly. "Ethel, you have taken the love-fever very badly."

"Don't tease her, Maudie," said the mother, kindly.

"Remember, miss, you may be the next victim," retorted Ethel.

The countess was merciful. She knew perfectly that Ethel was incapable of shining in general society that afternoon. She would have looked at her watch every five minutes at a concert, and entertained her companion with extracts from time-tables if she had been taken to a garden party, so Lady Jocelyn elected that they should all remain at home.

Singularly enough they had no engagement for the evening, so that if Keith did return that night there would be plenty of leisure to hear Sir Claude's sentiments respecting his daughter's marriage.

"It must be at Jocelyn," said Maude to her friend, as they sat together in the pretty morning-room.

"What?"

"The wedding, of course. Oh, Ethel, it must be, really. It would be such dreary work at Devreux without the vestige of a hostess."

"I'm sure I don't mind," blushing; "but it won't be for ever so long, Maudie."

"Nonsense!"

"I mean it."

"Why?"

"I don't know," thoughtfully. "Marriage is a very serious thing. One ought to take time to think over everything."

Maude Jocelyn burst out laughing.

"That is just what Louise said when she was engaged to Geoff. I remember it so well. It was here in this very room, and I was playing with my doll behind the curtains."

"What did Sir Geoffrey say?" demurely.

"He said—as Keith will, no doubt—that he quite agreed marriage was a very serious thing, but they could think about it much better together than separate. And they were married in less than two months."

"Really!"

"I shall miss you very much, Ethel."

"Miss me! Why, we shall be together oftener than ever, Maudie."

Maude shook her head.

"Up to now you have always seemed to be long to me, Ethel; it has always been for me that you came to us. That is all changed now. You belong to Keith."

Ethel did not contradict her.

"It is never quite the same when one's friend marries," went on Maudie, thoughtfully. "I thought I should have kept you a little longer."

"You will be marrying yourself soon."

Maude shook her head.



[AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.]

"Never, I think, Ethel."

"What nonsense!"

"Why? Everyone doesn't marry."

"You will," declared Ethel.

Time passed on. They had dinner. No telegram came from Keith, so they imagined he meant to come home that night. Lady Jocelyn never suspected his change of plans had been occasioned by Sir Claude's uncordiality.

"Keith is anxious to tell you everything at once," she said to Ethel, kindly. "He must be coming home to-night."

She had hardly finished speaking when they heard the noise of wheels; a cab was stopping at the house. A brilliant colour came to Ethel's cheeks; her eyes were fixed in eager expectancy on the drawing-room door.

Certainly someone had come in, but it could hardly be Keith, for the minutes passed and he did not appear. The girls looked disappointed. Lady Jocelyn, who was older and less easily impressed, rallied them.

"As if a cab stopping must mean Keith," she said, laughing. "I daresay it is someone for the earl on business. Ring for the coffee, Maude; I will not wait any longer; it is past nine."

Maude's hand was on the bell when a footman entered and presented a note to his mistress upon a silver salver.

When he had retired the countess read it slowly through. Her kindly face looked troubled at the perusal, but she said nothing of the matter to the girls.

"You had better not wait coffee for me, dears; and, Ethel," stooping to kiss the fair girl as she passed her chair, "don't sit up too late; it would be much better for you to see Keith in the morning."

"Is anything the matter?" asked Maude, anxiously, when her mother had left the room. "I have never seen mamma look so sad since Keith came home."

"Perhaps someone has come to her in trouble," suggested Ethel. "I think that note was from the person in the cab."

It was from the person in the cab, and some-

one in trouble had come to the house in Cadogan Street, but it was no stranger or mere acquaintance, it was the son and heir, to save whom a pang the mother would willingly have given her heart's best blood.

Lady Jocelyn had recognised her son's writing when the servant gave her the note, and even before she opened it a vague feeling of alarm had seized her.

It was very short, but hardly calculated to reassure her fears.

"CAN you come to me in the brown room? I dare not meet Ethel knowing what I have to tell her."

KEITH.

In the dear old room where many of his youthful hours had been spent, where he met his life's love after their years of separation, Lady Jocelyn found her son.

Good heavens! was that Keith?

She had parted from him only the night before, he had then looked happy, prosperous—now what a change!

There were dark rings beneath his bloodshot eyes. His hair was ruffled as though his fingers had played with it in the abstraction of despair. His face was ashen white, and there was a look about him which went to his mother's heart.

"My poor boy!"

And it was a ray of comfort to Keith that at least this trouble need not be hidden like the one which had made him an exile. In this, at least, he might claim his mother's sympathy, even though he could not tell her the true reason which actuated Sir Claude's rejection.

Lady Jocelyn kissed him and smoothed back the hair from his forehead with a gentle, caressing touch; then she went away to return in a minute with a glass of wine.

"I am certain you are over tired. You are looking dreadful, Keith."

He drank the wine.

"I have touched nothing since breakfast."

"My dear."

And she rose and rang the bell.

"I could not help it," he said, simply. "Going

down I was too full of hope to care to eat; coming back all seemed one blank despair. I could think of nothing but my trouble."

"Sir Claude must be shockingly inhospitable," said Lady Jocelyn, bitterly.

"There was something, I think, but I could not have broken bread in his house, it would have choked me."

The servant entered now with some refreshments daintily arranged upon a tray. The countess sent the man away and waited upon her son herself. Not a word of his story would she hear until he had been refreshed; then when he pushed his plate away she came back to his side.

"Now tell me all."

"Mother, do you think Sir Claude can have any personal spite to me?"

"I should say not. He is a most eccentric man, but how could he take a dislike to you? He has hardly seen you, and I imagine he would be the last person in the world to condemn anyone on hearsay. Besides, Keith, you have no enemies, so what could he hear against you?"

"Nevertheless, he refuses in the most determined manner to listen to my suit. Nothing I could say would move him."

"And he told me himself he was not ambitious for Ethel. Why, he must be mad."

"It was not ambition," explained Keith.

"What could he wish more for his child than to see her Countess of Jocelyn—some day?"

"Some day long removed, I hope, mother," tenderly.

"I am very, very sorry, Keith. I feel as if it were all my fault."

"How could that be, mother?"

"It was my darling plan that you should marry Ethel. I threw you together. I ought to have been more prudent."

"Don't blame yourself, dear. Whenever we had met we should have loved each other, and no one could have foreseen Sir Claude's objections. They seem to me most perfectly unreasonable."

"Has he any other views for Ethel?"

"He did not say. I don't think he looks like a match-maker. It seemed to me he cared nothing whom she married so that she did not marry me."

Lady Jocelyn's bewilderment was as great as his own, greater perhaps since she knew nothing of that secret of the past, which to Keith's mind shed just a little light upon the baronet's refusal.

"Of course, he will not let her stay here. Indeed, it would be awkward if he did. I love Ethel dearly, but I could not keep her here if the keeping her banished you."

"He is going to write to you about it."

"I hope I shall be able to command myself when I answer his letter."

"He means her to go there to Devreux. Oh! mother, think what her life will be shut up there with him."

It dawned upon Lady Jocelyn slowly that the extreme affection which had made her treat Ethel almost as her own child had hardly been a real kindness to the girl. She had made Ethel so much at home at Jocelyn that she was almost a stranger in her father's house.

It would be a terrible change. From one of the belles of the London season to be shut up in a rambling country house with no lady to associate with, and her only companion a father who had never shown her any affection, and who had now crossed her dearest wish.

"Poor child!"

"If ever there were a case for setting custom at defiance surely it is now," urged Keith, not looking into his mother's face, but standing with his eyes bent moodily upon the ground. "Every one who knows us will understand we have been driven to the step by Sir Claude's intolerable cruelty. Mother, I think we had better elope."

"Elope?"

She was no straight-laced prude, but she was a woman of high-souled, noble temperament. She came of a long line of ancestors who had wedded openly and in the sight of all their friends and kindreds. That her only son should have a runaway bride, that the future bearer of her own title should elope, were catastrophes almost too terrible for her to contemplate.

"There would be no harm in it," persisted Keith, still without looking at his mother.

"Would Ethel consent?"

"I think she would."

"I think not," returned his mother. "Ethel is very proud, and, Keith, there is always a certain amount of reproach attaching to the heroine of an elopement."

"I cannot see why."

"And though I should be the last person to predict such a fate for you and Ethel, I never yet, Keith, knew a secret marriage which turned out happily."

"But this needn't be so very secret," persisted Keith, irritably. "If we were married in London by special licence, and you and my father were present, I don't see that the slightest reproach could attach to Ethel."

Lady Jocelyn opened her eyes.

"Keith, I think your trouble must be turning your brain. Do you imagine your father would ever consent to be present at such a marriage as you describe? Do you think that I, to whom Sir Claude entrusted his child, would aid her in marrying against his wishes? I should never hold up my head again if I were so faithless to my trust."

"And we must be the sufferers," moodily. "If we did elope you would be against us as well as all the world. You prefer Sir Claude's whims to our happiness."

"My dear," she said, patiently, bearing his caprices with that unselfish love that only mothers know, "I should never be really against you, but if you married my ward—I look upon Ethel as such while she is with me—against her father's wishes I could not show approval of such a step. My love would never desert you, Keith, but for a time I should be unable to receive your wife."

"And other people would follow your lead."

"Yes; the only society you would have would be that of people we term a little fast and of

those beneath you in rank, who would overlook any foible in the heir to an earldom."

"You are very cruel, mother."

"Cruel to be kind, Keith."

"I suppose there is nothing for it but to part?"

"Don't you think time would change Sir Claude's objections to you?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I told him his power would not last long, that in less than three years Ethel would be of age and her own mistress."

"And what did he say?"

"I forget his words; his look haunts me now."

"Why?"

"I can't explain. It seemed a kind of threat that long before three years he would break her spirit and force her to give me up."

"He will never do that. Ethel is very staunch; with her to love once is to love for always."

"But three years shut up there," said Keith, dejectedly, "cut off entirely from you and Maude; think of the dreary life for my darling!"

Lady Jocelyn cried softly.

"And I was so happy. I thought your future looked so fair; I never dreamed of Sir Claude's taking an objection to you."

"I hope he will be kind to her."

"Ethel can hold her own; but, oh, it will be a terribly lonely life for her, poor child! And Maude, too, the separation will half break her heart, I expect."

"It is all my fault," said Keith, wistfully. "I had far better never have come home."

The countess kissed his brow as she had kissed it many times when he was a child.

"Never say that, my dearest; there never was a cloud yet but had a silver lining."

"There is no silver lining to mine."

"Things might be worse."

"How?"

"If Ethel did not love you."

The mother's words struck home, and she hastened to pursue her advantage.

"While you have her love, while you are sure of her truth, Keith, Sir Claude's refusal ought not to trouble you."

"But it does trouble me sadly."

"It ought not; you believe in Ethel, you trust your own love for her, don't you?"

"With all my heart."

"Then you should take courage; Ethel is eighteen now; when once she is of age no father in the world can separate you. I think myself he will yield long before that, when he once sees how determined you both are in your love."

Keith shook his head.

"He will never yield."

"Even if he does not three years are not an eternity. You will be still a young man; Ethel will even then not be so old as I was when I married your father, and yet," with a smile to the memory of her own love story, "I am sure he thought me young and bonny."

She had worked well. Already her sympathy had lightened the load at Keith's heart; already her mother love had made him see the brightest side of his lot. But a sudden reflection came to him. Hitherto he had thought of his own sorrow and disappointment, now he remembered that Ethel was waiting for him upstairs.

How they had looked forward to his return! What a detailed account he had promised her of his visit to the Court! And now how was he to tell her that all was over and that two who loved each other so dearly, must part?

"Is Ethel sitting up?"

"Yes."

She knew the conflict at her boy's heart, but she thought he would sleep better if he had not that dreadful task before him. He must not wake up with the terrible news still to break to Ethel.

Very gently she left the room and went upstairs. She found the girls sitting in silence, a strange dismay on their faces. Taking Ethel's hand the countess led her downstairs.

"My darling, I would spare you this trial if I could," she whispered, and then she sent her into the brown room to hear the news which

would pierce Keith's heart in the telling and almost break her own in the hearing.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOVE'S PAIN.

The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears.
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed with tears.

NEAR to her life's end did Ethel Devreux quite forget that summer night when the first shadow of her heart's trouble came to her.

Lady Jocelyn had told her nothing, but she had gathered from her manner that Keith had not prospered in his mission. On going into the brown room she saw him sitting wearily in an arm-chair, a look of bitter anguish on his face.

"Keith, Keith, what is the matter? Oh, tell me! Do not keep it from me. I can bear anything better than suspense."

For all answer he gathered her to his heart, and there, holding her in his close embrace, he rained kisses upon her eyes and lips.

"My darling, my darling, I can never let you go."

She did not struggle in his embrace. She let her head rest gently on his shoulder, as if it had found its true resting-place. Keith could hear her heart beating against his own.

"Tell me all," she pleaded.

"I cannot."

Very gently she disengaged herself from his loving clasp and stood before him, a strange courage shining in her star-like eyes.

"No one can make us quite miserable while we love each other, Keith. No one in the whole world can make me wretched while you trust me."

"It is so hard," said Keith, bitterly. "All these years your father has never interfered with your wishes, and now, when we might be so happy, he steps in between us."

"Has he refused his consent?"

"Yes."

By the way in which Keith spoke this single word Ethel knew there had been something specially bitter in Sir Claude's refusal.

"I cannot understand it," said Ethel.

"Nor I."

"If Lord and Lady Jocelyn had objected," said the girl, slowly, "I should not have minded. You are their hope and pride, and they might have wished you to look higher. But for my father, who has never thought of me save as a troublesome encumbrance, to stand between me and happiness is too cruel."

Keith answered nothing; his despair was too deep for words.

"He may change his mind," said Ethel, with a faint attempt at consolation.

But even as she spoke she felt how very unlikely it was.

"No," said Keith, dejectedly, "he was too positive for that."

"Did he give any reason?"

"I believe his motive was personal dislike."

"Keith, how could he?"

"You must not expect everyone to see me with your eyes, darling."

A long, long silence fell upon the pair. Ethel was thinking indignantly of her father. Keith's mind was busy with that other idea—his mother had so discouraged.

They loved each other dearly; in every respect they were well suited—on one side, at least, they had the warmest approval. Why should they not take the law into their own hands?

True, Ethel was under age, but once married, Keith did not think this would separate them. Half an hour in a grim old city church, with no spectators save a pew-opener and clerk, would make them just as truly husband and wife as though they were married in Hanover Square in presence of all the élite of Belgravia.

His mother had said they would have no society, that the world would look oddly upon

Ethel, but they needed no company save each other, and he should know how to protect his wife from even the shadow of unkindness.

"I suppose we shall not be allowed to see each other so often," said Ethel, timidly, "but you will write to me, won't you, Keith?"

"You don't understand," he said, bitterly. "I shall never be allowed to see you. Sir Claude will take care of that."

"But Lady Jocelyn?"

"Your father thinks she has betrayed his trust."

"Won't he let me stay here?" said Ethel. "Oh, Keith, you cannot mean that he will send me to Devreux Court?"

"He is coming to fetch you."

Ethel wrung her hands in agony. She was a daughter of the Devreux, the Court was her ancestral home, but the idea of living there separated from Keith and all she held most dear filled her with the bitterness of despair.

"You do not mean it!" she gasped. "Oh, Keith, he could not be so cruel!"

But Keith was not at all inclined to look on any but the darkest side of the future. The blacker he painted it the more chance of Ethel listening to his persuasions.

"Sir Claude will take you to Devreux Court," said Keith, firmly, not a quiver in his rich, deep voice; "he will shut you up there, and make you lead a life as lonely and isolated as his own. You will be cut off from all communication with your friends. Even if you managed to write to them your father would intercept their replies."

Ethel shivered on that summer evening at the picture Keith called up.

"It will not last for ever," she said, gravely. "When once I am of age no one in the world can keep us apart if you still love me."

"I shall love you till I die," said Keith, fiercely.

And he kept his word. In the dark days that followed—days when he grew to wish he had never seen Ethel's violet eyes, when he deemed her all that was false and faithless, he loved her still. Try as he would he never could root that love from his heart.

"Then it will not be so very long," said Ethel, trying hard to be brave and cheerful.

"It is nearly three years," said Keith.

"But think what we shall have to look forward to! I shall live in the hope of our reunion."

"We need never be parted at all," said Keith, slowly.

No shadow of his meaning came to Ethel Devreux. She looked at him in sheer amazement.

Keith saw that she had not grasped his meaning, that if he would be understood he must speak more plainly. He pressed her more closely to himself.

"No one could separate you from your husband, Ethel," he said, tenderly.

"But my father?"

"Sir Claude will never give his consent to our marriage. Why should we wait for it?"

"What can you mean?"

"Your father will come to-morrow to ask for his daughter. What if he found her already gone?"

Ethel trembled.

"If you love me," went on Keith, passionately, "you will trust yourself to me. We will go away together, Ethel, and before Sir Claude finds us you will be my wife."

"I couldn't," faltered the girl, slowly. "Keith, I couldn't come to you like that. You would despise me perhaps afterwards if I did."

"I should never despise you for thinking more of my love than the hollow forms and ceremonies of our world."

He was angry. If he were willing that his wife should come to him like that why should Ethel raise obstacles?

"What would your mother say?"

"I think, Ethel, my wishes ought to be more to you than my mother's," in a hurt voice.

"Listen, Keith," said his fiancée, her voice

full of emotion. "I love you better than the whole world, but I cannot do this thing. I have been as your mother's adopted child for years—what would she say if I eloped with her son?"

"You always harp on that. 'What would people say?' If you loved me you would not mind sacrificing your pride," a little fretfully.

"I love you too well for that," was the reply. "No act of mine shall ever bring a slur upon your name, never while I live, Keith."

"There would be no slur," impatiently. "Everyone would know it was your father's fault."

"I think not," timidly, yet with quiet decision. "When there is a choice of culprits the world always blames the woman, Keith. People would look coldly on me. In time perhaps they would look so on you for my sake."

"I should not care."

A bitter conflict rose in Ethel's soul. She loved Keith with a devotion which was the master passion of her life. She was not free from jealousy. She trusted her lover entirely, but she could never forget that Rosalie Norton was beautiful, and Keith had seemed to admire her. The temptation to let him have his way, to bind him to her for ever, was of fearful strength.

A long silence reigned. Keith thought she was yielding, and took courage.

"You are too sensitive, my dearest. No one could blame you. To-morrow would see our marriage. I should take you abroad, far out of Sir Claude's reach. We would wander together in pleasant, sunny lands. No one should say an angry word to my darling."

"And afterwards?"

"In time we should come home. People would forget our romantic marriage, and we should take our proper place in society."

Ethel shook her head.

"People never forget when one wants them to. They would remember only too well."

"And if they did?"

"I should be a 'woman with a story.' People would point me out as the girl who ran away with Lord Jocelyn's heir. Don't you see, Keith, you are the heir to an earldom? I am portionless. No one would ever forget that."

"I am not of the importance you seem to fancy," he answered, persuasively.

"Mothers would receive me coldly. Very young girls would look at me with a kind of awe, as someone they had heard of and been warned against. The only people, Keith, who would care to know me would be those who were of the same order, who, like me, had stepped ever so little, only a hair's breadth maybe, off the line."

Keith paced the room in angry strides.

"Women are all alike," he cried, at last. "While things go smoothly they are faithful enough, but they all leave one at the first cloud."

"Keith," imploringly, "have pity."

"And have you had pity on me?" he asked her, angrily. "You won my heart, you made me love you better than life itself, you promised to be my wife, and now you desert me."

"I do not," protested Ethel. "As soon as I am of age I will marry you, if you still care to have me," a sob choking her voice.

"It is not as if Sir Claude had been like other fathers," remonstrated Keith, "then I could have understood your scruples. But he has never shown you either love or tenderness. I have heard you say so yourself. Then why should our happiness be sacrificed to his caprice?"

"It is for your sake, Keith. I could not come to you as you wish. In the future you would be sorry I had done so."

Keith dropped his anger. He was the pleading, supplicating lover now.

"Do you know what your life will be like?" he asked her, "shut up there in that gloomy old house, cut off from every tie of friendship? Have pity on yourself if you will have none on me. When once you leave this house your decision is irrevocable. No effort of mine will avail then to rescue you from Sir Claude."

"Do you think he will be unkind to me, Keith?"

"I don't think he will starve you, or lock you up in a dungeon," gravely, "but I think he will make your life such a weariness to you that you will be glad to escape at any price."

"At what price?"

"My darling," kissing her, "you are very young, and you are quite unused to sorrow. Do you think your courage will hold out during nearly three years of such a life as yours will be at Devreux Court?"

"Yes, for I am a Devreux, and we never change."

"Other men will come," went on her lover, with cruel distinctness. "Just as bitterly as Sir Claude has opposed my suit may he advocate another's. Cut off from your friends, with no means of communication with them, you will be entirely in your father's power."

"You are going too far, Keith," said the girl, reprovingly. "In these days I cannot be forced into a marriage against my will."

Keith shuddered.

"I cannot explain it to you. I know I must seem beside myself, but I have the fixed, unalterable conviction that if we are parted to-morrow we are parted for all time."

"You might trust me, Keith."

"You are so beautiful," he whispered, "and you know so little of the world."

"I know enough to have chosen my hero," she answered, fondly, "and I shall never change."

"Will nothing move you, Ethel?"

She shook her head.

"You are resolved that we shall be parted?"

"Only for a time, Keith, only for a time."

The clock struck twelve; the wax candles on the chimney-piece were burning low in their sockets. Keith woke to the knowledge of the flight of time.

"I must go," he said, hurriedly; he was not one of the household at Cadogan Street, but occupied bachelor chambers hard by.

"Ethel, I shall not come to-morrow; I could not bear it."

She understood what he meant. This was to be "Good bye" until Sir Claude changed his mind, or she—which was likely to happen first—became her own mistress.

"I wish you would write to me," she said, playing with a button of his coat.

"It would be useless, darling. Sir Claude has determined to separate you from me entirely."

"Keith," wistfully, "shall you love me just the same when we meet again?"

"Just the same."

"I think you will; but, my dearest, if you should change, if aught should happen that you did not want me, I trust to you to tell me; I could bear it better, Keith, than being your wife and having only half your heart."

"I shall never need to tell you."

She took the flowers from her dress, two white, half-blown rosebuds growing on one stem. With a half caressing touch she separated them and placed one in his hand.

"If ever you should wish all this forgotten, Keith, send me the white rose. I shall understand; it will be easier to you than writing, I think."

He took the flower half reluctantly.

"It is only as a keep-sake, remember. I shall never send it you, Ethel; if either flower changes possession it will be yours."

"Mine will be buried with me."

After that they sat a few minutes longer in silence; then the door opened and Lady Jocelyn came in.

"Keith, you must not keep Ethel up any longer, she will be quite ill by to-morrow."

"It does not matter," said Ethel; "to-morrow and all the days that come after it won't matter. I am saying good bye to happiness to-night."

For one instant Keith held her in his arms, and then resigned her to his mother and went out into the night. Not a star shone in the sky; the moon was hidden behind angry clouds, but the darkness of nature was as nothing to the black despair which filled Keith's heart.

Nothing could have been gentler than the

touch which Lady Jocelyn laid upon Ethel's shoulder.

"My dear, you cannot tell how sorry I am at your father's decision. It is like losing a child of my own to give you up."

"Don't call it giving me up," sobbed Ethel. "Dear Lady Jocelyn, I may come back some day, mightn't I? He loves me so, I think he will wait for me, even though it is so long."

The countess smoothed back the golden hair and kissed the fair, open brow.

"I am sure Keith will be faithful," she answered, simply. "You are his first love, and you will be his last."

"He was angry," whispered Ethel. "He thought I ought to have come to him instead of going home, but he will forgive me."

Upstairs they found Maude almost as distressed. Miss Jocelyn had two causes for sorrow; she grieved deeply for her brother's unhappiness, but still more for the loss of her life-long friend.

"Sir Claude is very wicked!" she cried, impulsively. "Oh, Ethel, I shall miss you so!"

But it seemed that with Ethel the greater sorrow had swallowed up the less. After the agony of her parting with Keith life seemed to hold nothing more for her of joy or sorrow.

To Maude's surprise and dismay she did not shed any more tears; she dried her eyes and began to pack up.

In vain Miss Jocelyn implored her to go to bed; the morning would be time enough for her preparations; the maids would manage everything.

"I could not sleep if I went to bed," replied Miss Devreux. "I am better moving about; it does not give me time to think."

So she busied herself with an unnatural composure, which almost broke Maude's heart to see. Ethel seemed really the more composed and hopeful of the two. She folded dresses and skirts with as much deliberation as if her whole future had depended upon their escaping creases.

Maude watched her for some time in silent disapproval; then she found voice.

"I can't bear it, Ethel—do cry or say something. I can't bear to see you going on as if nothing had happened; it frightens me."

Ethel kissed her.

"Go to bed, dear, don't stay here. I must go on or I think I should go mad. If once I began to give way I should never stop. My eyes are dry, Maude, but they burn as if they were on fire. I have no more tears, perhaps I have shed them all. Everything seems a blank to me; I feel as if my heart were breaking."

And before Maude could answer her the iron will, which had been the secret of Ethel's calm, gave way, and she sank down a white, still heap upon the floor.

(To be Continued.)

TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE.

CHAPTER IX.

To know, to esteem, to love—and then to part,
Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart.

THE news spread like wildfire, and intense indignation filled the heart of every inhabitant of Hartford who heard it. Strange to state for once the real culprit was blamed. People spoke of Dennis Vanstone with a touch of contemptuous pity as well as indignation in their tone, but of Eleanor Merton all spoke with unmitigated scorn and detestation. It was she without doubt who had done the mischief. Had they not noticed how she had mixed herself up in Dennis Vanstone's business of late?

Dame Halsworthy could call to mind a dozen cases in which she had thrust herself quite un-

invited into his affairs and Miss Hilda's, and how she had lately always been hanging about Stonevale and the farm and dodging Master Dennis's footsteps.

Popular feeling ran very high against her, and poor Mrs. Merton had to bear many a rough speech and many a rude slight during the following days which she did not in the least merit, having been kept completely in the dark by Eleanor as to her plans and intentions, and believing her to be at a neighbouring village on a visit to a distant relation, till her letter announcing her marriage had arrived.

"She has behaved disgracefully," Mrs. Halsworthy, but you all know well I have no power over her. How could a sick body like me manage a determined girl as wilful as Eleanor?" she cried, in pitiful tones.

And the folk were fain to admit that old Mrs. Merton was not much to blame in the matter, it was the girl herself who had done the mischief without help from anyone.

"They'll not have a very pleasant return home," cried Dame Halsworthy. "Mistress Eleanor will come to a house without servants. Mrs. Green intends going, though she's been all her life housekeeper at Stonevale, and Jane and Susan too, they won't stop along o' the likes of her, though they've been in the Vanstone family all their lives pretty near, since they were bitts o' girls. Mistress Eleanor will have few friends in Hartford, I reckon, after this! I pity Mister Dennis, for all he's behaved bitter bad to Miss Hilda, he's got his punishment coming, mark my words. She'll never be a crown of glory to him, not she."

"Nay, more like rottenness in the bones, as the wise man said," replied a neighbour. "Who'll deceive and cheat and lie before marriage will cheat and lie and deceive afterwards. Poor Miss Hilda, what's the news of her, Nurse Halsworthy?"

"Bad enough. Doctor's been with her twice to-day already, and I am on my way to the farm now to help Mrs. Margery nurse her, for she can't be left day nor night. She lies raving, poor soul, and knows no one. Ah! but she may have her death laid to her charge, may Eleanor Merton. Brain fever's no joke, neighbours," replied the good woman.

"But what did he do it for?" said another, unconsciously repeating poor Hilda's words.

"Ah! what for, indeed," replied the woman, shaking her head, "that's the puzzle. Was he mad? or has his wife put some nonsense into his head about Miss Hilda? Who can say?"

"Mark my words, dame, it will all come out sooner or later. Truth can't remain hid for ever," said another.

"Ay, yes, but too late for poor Miss Hilda, I guess," replied Nurse Halsworthy, with a groan. "Mayhap when she's dead or heart-broken he'll learn the truth. Now I must be going. Good day to ye, friends."

And around the little white bed there were assembled a sad company, watching with eager, tearful interest the invalid on it, who with restless limbs and wandering gaze tossed to and fro, calling ever and anon in agonised accents for one who could never again be ought to her but a stranger—to one whom she had loved only too well, and from whom the whispers of an enemy had for ever divided her.

"Will she get over it? Will she recover sir?" asked Margery, imploringly.

The doctor looked doubtful.

"Impossible to say yet, Mrs. Margery, but I have hopes. She is young and has a good constitution, and careful nursing may do much, but the shock has been a very severe one—the brain is terribly affected. For the life of me I can't make out what has induced Vanstone to act so madly. Who is 'her lover' to whom he alludes? Has anyone been visiting Miss Ray of whom he could have been jealous, dame?" asked the grey-haired doctor.

"Never a body, sir," replied Margery, firmly. "Miss Hilda saw no one except her old friends in the village, and I don't believe a man younger than yourself (begging your pardon, sir) or Mr. Jenkins has been nigh the place. Miss Hilda has had no heart for company since the old

master died, and latterly no time either. Depend on it, sir, Mr. Dennis has been deluded by some tale, some scandal, and—"

"Ah! there's plenty of that always going," Mrs. Margery, replied the doctor, gravely; "the unruly member has a deal to answer for sometimes, but it must have been a brave person who would have dared to speak evil of Miss Ray."

And he looked sadly and fondly at his patient, who, throwing her arms wildly from side to side, muttered incoherent sentences in which the names of Dennis and Eleanor were frequently to be recognised.

With a sigh he turned away. "I'll return again at ten or eleven," he said; "keep her as quiet as possible, and should the delirium leave her, do not for your life allude to what has happened."

And with a heavy heart he rode away from the farm.

"Who would have believed it? Who would have thought it?" sobbed Dame Halsworthy. "Mr. Dennis, who loved her so dearly, to treat her so! Ah, Mrs. Margery, it's all that foreign girl, depend on it. But who could have believed it, even of her?"

"Who, indeed?" replied Margery, "and she was always good and kind to her. Ah! how could she have had the heart to do it? She must be a bad girl, dame—a bitter bad girl. Oh! will my darling die?"

And she came near the bed, where Hilda lay moaning and tossing in her delirium.

"Master Dennis was always hasty and quick from a child, Mrs. Margery," sighed Dame Halsworthy; "'twas his great fault. Eleanor Merton, she set her cap at him long ago. I told him of it, but he laughed at me, and I've watched and suspected her ever since, and laughed myself to see her little wheedling, coaxing ways with him, little guessing that she'd succeed in her wicked purpose of turning him from Miss Hilda, and she would not have done it if she had not succeeded in arousing his jealousy. He was always of a jealous nature, dame. Even when a little one, I mind me, he couldn't bear to see me nor his poor mother take notice of another child. He'd cry, and stamp, and push the little one aside, and refuse to speak to us until we had kissed and petted him to the full. Depend on it Eleanor Merton, who's no fool, has worked on his feelings and fanned his jealousy till it burst into a flame. She'd be for ever talking of Master Gerald, I mind me, months ago, even before me, and saying as how he and Miss Hilda were sweethearts, spite of all I could say to contradict her. I pity Mr. Dennis with such a wife, dame."

"Yes; and to think he might have had her," replied Margery.

"Yes, indeed," answered the other, with a sob. "Well, they say love is blind, and for sure anger and jealousy are the same, Mrs. Margery. He'll live to repent this day's work, mark my words. Eleanor Merton will be a thorn in his side for life. Poor boy! My poor Master Dennis!"

And she wiped the tears from her cheek. And together they sat by the sick bed, watching the sick girl, listening to her broken words and almost incoherent ravings till the sun set and darkness fell again upon the face of the earth.

CHAPTER X.

My rage is gone
And I am struck with sorrow.

It was a dull, gloomy evening—the Thursday evening when Dennis brought his bride home. Their stay in London had not been prolonged, although Eleanor would have been nothing loth to remain there another week. The taste for gaiety grew on her; she could not but perceive the notice her strange, foreign style of beauty attracted at every place of amusement where she appeared, and her vanity was intensely gratified at the admiration it called forth.

Dennis had given her carte blanche as to money, and she had availed herself of it to the

full, and her wardrobe was soon furnished with every requisite that a lady—and a lady in a much higher position than Eleanor was—could possibly require, and when the day for returning to the country arrived she said farewell to London with unfeigned regret.

"How I have enjoyed myself!" she sighed, regretfully, as she lay back in the train that was rapidly conveying her away from the scenes of her pleasures and triumphs. "I didn't believe there was such a charming, fascinating place as London in the world. How I wish we were going to live there, Dennis!"

But Dennis gave an unsympathising grunt, and with a gloomy face sat silently beside her, without responding to or sharing in her enthusiasm.

"I suppose you will be delighted to get back to Stonevale, Dennis?" she continued. "Gentlemen always do like the country best, but after London I'm afraid it will seem very stupid and unrefined to me."

Dennis sighed. Was he glad to return to Stonevale? No, the idea of seeing the old place again under such altered circumstances was very distasteful to him. He felt as if he could scarcely bear to enter the house, where he had hoped to pass so many happy years with Hilda, to see all the preparations he had made for her, all the improvements they had planned and begun together, now that he was the husband of another; he felt ashamed at the prospect of meeting his old friends and acquaintances again, and of presenting Eleanor to them as his wife.

What would they all think of his conduct to Hilda? What explanation could he give of it? And far down in the secret depths of his heart a doubt had arisen, a doubt gathering weight and magnitude day by day, a doubt which he would hardly allow himself to harbour, but which nevertheless forced itself on him whether he would or no, as to whether his conduct to Hilda would admit of justification either in the eyes of Heaven or of men.

Eleanor's next words grated harshly on his feelings.

"We must have a great house-warming next week, Dennis, and ask all our friends to an evening party, and give a supper to the tenantry in the servants'-hall. I must re-arrange the drawing-room first though, and put in all the pretty things I have bought for it in London, and above all things I must take down those hideous knitted curtains Mrs. Green showed me."

"The curtains! They are my mother's work," interrupted Dennis, hastily, and remembering how Hilda had repaired them and said she valued them, as being his mother's work, more than she would value the costliest lace.

"Perhaps," replied Eleanor, carelessly; "but they are old-fashioned and worn out—all darned too now. We—I can put them away somewhere if you wish them kept as family relics, but I could not keep them up in my drawing-room, they would offend my eye every time I looked at them. I hate old-fashioned things."

Dennis looked at her askance.

"I hope you're not going to turn everything topsy-turvy; I hate a confusion in the house," he said.

"Oh, you'll never know anything about it," she laughed, in reply, quite good-naturedly, but not giving in an inch. "You'll be out on the farm, you know, and I'll not touch your den, I promise you. You shall have all the old rubbish in the house put there if you like. Dear me, how tired I am! Just give me my cloak, Dennis—the one lined with fur—I think I'll go to sleep."

He complied, and she was soon slumbering sweetly and contentedly, whilst he was left to chew the cud of bitter reflections in silence.

He was glad it was a dull, dark evening, and that the sun had set before they arrived at Garford station; there was less chance of their being recognised on their way to Stonevale; and he hastened Eleanor, who was inclined to linger and court the attention of the bystanders, into the dog-cart and gave orders for her numerous boxes to be sent over next morning, and tried to believe that the porters and station-master and

passengers were not watching him and his bride with curious eyes, and drove off as fast as possible towards home.

"Don't upset me, Dennis," cried Eleanor, with a laugh, as they whirled round a sharp corner. "I want to be Mistress of Stonevale and show the neighbours how things are done in London before you break my neck."

But with an exclamation that sounded very like "Confound the neighbours" Dennis gave another cut to the horse, and turning away his head spoke never a word more till he pulled up before his own door.

To his surprise no one was there to meet him but the stable boy.

"Where's Mrs. Green?" he cried, as he rang the bell violently. "Where are Susan and Jenny?"

"Mrs. Green be here, sir," replied the boy, "but Jane and Susan, they be gone."

"Gone!" cried Dennis. "Where to?"

"Don't know, sir; Mrs. Green knows," he replied. "Here she be," and the door opened slowly and Mrs. Green appeared at the top of the steps.

She courtesied coldly to Dennis in return for his good evening, and he turned away to help Eleanor down from the dog-cart.

"This is your new mistress, Mrs. Green," said he, and again the woman courtesied yet more frigidly.

"Is dinner ready?" continued Dennis, sharply, leading Eleanor into the house, who had returned Mrs. Green's courtesy with a haughty nod.

"I've prepared a meal for you, the best I could, in the dining-room, sir," she replied, opening the door and lighting the candles on the dining-table. "Will you please to go to your room, madame?"

And she turned to Eleanor.

"Yes, show me the way and carry my dressing-bag up," replied Eleanor, haughtily.

And she followed Mrs. Green up to her room.

"Dear me! what an old-fashioned, dreary place this looks after London!" she cried. "It's damp, I'm sure. Has the bed been aired, Mrs. Green?"

"I slept in it myself last night," replied the woman, shortly.

"Dear me! what coarse sheets! I must alter all this, Mrs. Green. Are there none finer?" said Eleanor, going up to the bed and turning down the quilt. "In London now—"

But when she looked round she found Mrs. Green had departed.

The dinner passed over silently. Dennis looked dull and out of temper, and nothing on the table appeared to be to his taste.

"Who cooked this meal, Mrs. Green?" he inquired. "Susan, I suppose."

"Susan is gone, sir," replied the woman, quietly.

"Gone! And why?" asked Dennis.

"I will tell you to-morrow," she replied. "Jane has also left."

"Both gone!" cried Dennis, angrily. "How is that? Are they become too grand for my place all of a sudden, I should like to know?"

"Don't distress yourself, Dennis, my dear," interrupted Eleanor, calmly; "all that comes within my province now, you know. There's no necessity for you to go troubling yourself about the vagaries of maid-servants. I daresay the girls were no good—bachelor's servants never are. I'll speak to Mrs. Green about it to-morrow and get new servants from Garford."

"If you please, Mr. Vanstone, I've a word to say to you first," interrupted Mrs. Green, her colour rising, and her temper too, at hearing Jane and Susan spoken of so disparagingly. "It's just this, sir. I may be no good too, perhaps, and I'm leaving you to-morrow like the girls, sir."

Dennis's face fell, and he bit his lip angrily.

"Why is this, Mrs. Green?" he asked, although he guessed truly enough what the answer would be to his question.

And Eleanor, knowing it too, threw herself back disdainfully in her chair.

"If you please, sir, I had rather not answer that question," replied the woman. "I've been in the service of the Vanstones thirty years

come summer, sir, and now I think it's time for me to leave it."

Eleanor laughed scornfully.

"Your reason, Mrs. Green," cried Dennis, hoarsely. "I am not accustomed to be put off in this fashion with evasive answers, as you very well know, and I desire you will tell me at once the reason for your leaving me."

Mrs. Green paused and hesitated, and glanced at Eleanor.

"Oh, pray don't mind me, Mrs. Green," said she, with mock courtesy. "I really would offer to retire and leave you alone with Mr. Vanstone, but as I am his wife—"

"It's BECAUSE you are his wife," replied Mrs. Green, stung by her sarcastic tone, "that I am leaving—that the girls have left. Oh, Mr. Dennis, sir, it goes to my heart to leave you, but—but—we all loved and honoured Miss Hilda. We could not bear—"

"Stop!" shouted Dennis, in a voice of thunder, starting up. "Stop! Don't insult me and my wife by naming her before us—the base deceiver!"

"Mister Dennis!—he's ye gone mad?" cried Mrs. Green. "Miss Hilda, the pure angel, a deceiver! God forgive you for saying it."

"It's true. Did I not see her? Ah!" and he sank back trembling in his chair, huge drops of perspiration standing on his forehead. "Go! Don't speak before me of HER! Pure angel indeed!"

"Leave the room, Mrs. Green," cried Eleanor, pointing to the door. "You are right; the sooner you leave this house the better. You are no good, like the girls, or you would not have mentioned the name of that person before me."

And her eyes flashed with vindictive fire.

"And you are right," replied the woman, with quiet scorn. "You are not worthy to hear her name spoken. Ah! you think all Hartford is as blind as my poor master there, that we none of us have seen your wiles and cunning and deceit, that we don't know who it is who has filled the master's head with vile tales, but—"

"Leave the room, Mrs. Green!" shouted Dennis, rising and opening the door. "This is not the way you should dare to speak to your mistress—my wife!"

"Maybe, sir. I mean no disrespect for you, but she has killed Miss Hilda with her lying tales, as cruelly as if she had stabbed her or cut her throat. She is dying now, sir; her life has been despaired of these two days."

And Mrs. Green burst into tears.

"Dying?" said Dennis, in a low, harsh voice.

"Dying?"

"Yes, dying," sobbed Mrs. Green; "and all through HER. All Hartford knows it."

Dennis fell back a step, pale as a ghost, and for the moment even Eleanor looked moved.

"And Gerald?" said Dennis, at last.

"Mr. Ray? He be gone back to Australia in his ship from Branton, back to his wife, I suppose, for they do say he married Maggie Donovan," replied Mrs. Green, sadly.

"He married her!" cried Dennis, whilst Eleanor's face turned pale, and she trembled violently.

"Yes, he married Maggie; he's gone back to her," repeated Mrs. Green.

Dennis uttered a cry of despair, and turned a fierce look on Eleanor.

She flew to his side.

"His wife? It is not true. Remember what we—what you saw and heard, Dennis. He is NOT married, woman," and she turned angrily on Mrs. Green. "How dare you tell your master these lies?"

"Lies, be they?" replied Mrs. Green. "It is not I who tell lies. Well, I'm going. I've had my say; time will show who's been telling lies. I've done my duty, and said what I felt I ought, and now I'll go."

"The sooner the better," replied Eleanor, spitefully and coldly, and shut the door behind the sobbing woman.

"The audacity of some folks," she cried, going up to Dennis, who was sitting with a dazed, agonised face on the sofa, "the audacity of some people passes all belief. My poor Dennis!"

But Dennis put her coldly and sternly aside.

"Another time, Eleanor, another time. I am not fit to speak to you now," he said.

And he rose and left the room, and locked himself into his study, and that night Eleanor saw him no more.

As soon as the door closed behind her husband Eleanor's mask fell from her face; her easy, careless manner left her, the scornful smile faded from her lips; she looked worn and haggard and old.

"The tell-tale, the meddling old hag," she muttered. "How can she know that Gerald Ray is really married? Bah! they only conjecture it. But it's unfortunate. Ha! ha! what a nice coming home, to be sure. No servants, and a husband in fits of despair because he is told his old sweetheart is ill. Well, thank Heaven I'm mistress here now, and there are plenty of other servants to be had."

But in spite of her would-be indifference Eleanor felt uneasy. What if Dennis should discover her trick? She had seen enough of him by this time to fear his anger, and the idea of his wrath if he should find her out filled her with a cold, creeping terror.

She waited with a nervous anxiety for him to return to the dining-room; every sound made her start and her heart beat fast, but he came not, and when the tall clock in the hall struck eleven Eleanor crept off silently to bed, and burying her face in the pillow slept at length, overcome by fatigue and terror.

Next morning she almost despised herself for the excess of her terror on the previous evening.

"How could he know that I knew of the marriage, if others do even?" she thought. "He saw what I saw, and judged for himself. He has no right to blame me a bit more than himself, even if he find Mrs. Green's story to be true—impudent woman! I hope someone will write to me for her character."

And arraying herself in one of her newly-bought muslin morning wrappers and jaunty little lace caps, she went downstairs to the morning-room, where she found breakfast ready.

"Mr. Vanstone has gone out and begs you won't wait, ma'am," said Mrs. Green, coldly.

Eleanor deigned no reply, but seated herself at the table, and without giving further thought to her husband began her breakfast.

"Order the pony carriage for me at ten," she said, shortly. "I am going into Garford."

And when the ten o'clock came she drove off, and in a few hours returned with a showy, middle-aged woman, whom she there and then installed as housekeeper of Stonevale, bidding Mrs. Green leave the place at once. And then she set about unpacking her London purchases and arranging her room according to her fancy.

And all day long Dennis remained away—on the farm, she imagined, but in reality he was wandering about aimlessly from field to field, Mrs. Green's words respecting Hilda ringing in his ears.

How could he obtain news of her? Dame Halsworthy was at the farm helping Margery to nurse her, or she would have told him all. He dreaded to face the neighbours, and yet he was longing for tidings of her. What could he do?

As he sat on a stile thinking over what had passed the sounds of wheels reached him, and looking up he espied Dr. Charnock's gig coming down the road.

He jumped up.

"Doctor! doctor!" he shouted.

The old man pulled up and looked out at him gravely and wonderingly.

"How is she? How is Hilda—Miss Ray?" he cried.

"How is she, Mr. Vanstone?" he replied, gravely and coldly. "As near death's door as it is possible for a living person to be."

And he was about to drive on.

"For God's sake, stop, doctor!" he cried, in a voice of agony. "Don't leave me like this. Is there no hope for her?"

"Whilst there is life there is hope, Dennis

Vanstone, I can't say more," replied he. "It is her mind that is ill—her heart that is broken. You know more about that than I do."

Dennis groaned bitterly.

"Your conduct has been the cause of her illness," he continued. "Her brain could not stand the cruel shock. She may recover her bodily health, but she will never be the same woman again. I doubt if it were not best for her not to recover, Vanstone. Poor child! what a life of sorrow there will be before her if she is spared!"

And without a word more he drove off, leaving Dennis but little comforted by what he had learnt.

Yes, he had done it, he had dealt this deadly blow to the woman who had loved him—for his blind jealousy was gone now, and he felt she had loved him truly. Would she die? If so, was he not her murderer? Mrs. Green was right; and with an aching heart he turned away in the direction of home.

As he came across the garden the voice of Eleanor carolling a gay Spanish ditty fell on his ear, and jarred terribly on his feelings. He hated her; yes, at that moment he positively hated her; hated her for being his wife, for being young and strong and happy, for being at Stonevale in Hilda's place, and then came the bitter remembrance that it was he of his own free will who had made her his wife and put his future in her hands, and cast Hilda out from his heart and home.

"Dennis," cried her shrill voice, as his footstep caught her ear, "Dennis, where have you been all day? Come up and see what I have done here."

And mechanically Dennis ascended the stairs, and presently stood in the old room, so transformed and altered under Eleanor's directions that he hardly recognised it.

"Who is this?" he asked, as his eyes fell on the new housekeeper, who stood in a corner courtysying genteelly.

"My new housekeeper, Mrs. Janson," replied Eleanor.

"Then Mrs. Green has gone?" asked he, with a pang at his heart, for it hurt him to part with his old servant.

"Certainly. You could not imagine I should keep her after her outrageous behaviour last night," replied Eleanor.

"No," said Dennis, bitterly. "I thought you would in all probability turn her out, yet perhaps when one thinks of it it is a trifle hard on her, for we must allow she only spoke truth."

Eleanor shrugged her shoulders.

"A complaint to me certainly," she replied, coldly. "I am sorry you think Mrs. Green was right in calling me a—"

"There, there!" interrupted Dennis. "She was wrong of course. I beg your pardon, Eleanor, I'm out of sorts to-day, I'll be off," and he walked slowly out of the room without bestowing a word of praise or comment even on all the decorations and alterations Eleanor had effected therein.

"What a bear!" she thought, as he passed out. "Moping over Hilda Ray's illness, I suppose. Well, he'll get over it in time, and she'll get round fast enough, I daresay, and then it will be all right and we shan't deserve to be called murderers, as Mrs. Green was pleased politely to designate us just now. Heigho! this is dull work after London. I wish Dennis were a little more companionable. I'd go out and see some of the neighbours, only I suppose I ought to make my first appearance at church on Sunday. I'll wear my lilac silk dress and white lace shawl and make Dennis come with me, and we'll sit in the great square pew at the top of the aisle, behind Lady Marsham's; I shall like that. I wish Lady Marsham would call on me; she did on Dennis's mother when she was a young woman, he says. A young woman! Is it possible that that fat, dumpy, grey-haired, pompon little woman can ever have been young and pretty as they say?" and she looked at her own blooming face in the glass. "Well, I hope I'll die before I become such a fright!"

And then she put away the disagreeable

thoughts of old age from her mind and was speedily absorbed in the contemplation of the various pieces of finery she had collected in London, and which Mrs. Janson had spread in bewildering, fascinating confusion on the sofa and bed before her. She tried on one after another, and each seemed more fascinating than the last.

"What will they all say to these lovely things?" she thought. "Oh, how I wish we lived in London instead of in this dreary, old-fashioned, hum-drum place!" and she put the things aside almost crossly and left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

I did not think to shed a tear in all my miseries, but thou hast forced me.

HILDA RAY did not die; for many weeks she lay on a bed of sickness, her recovery looked upon as hopeless, but at length she began to amend, and contrary to the expectations of both doctors who attended her she slowly but surely recovered.

But what a wreck she was! Who would have recognised in the pale, thin-faced woman, with hair prematurely streaked with grey, and the wild, hopeless-looking eyes and emaciated form, the blooming, happy maiden of six months before?

As she awoke to life and reason once more, so the remembrance of all that had passed came back to her, and every moment that she spent and that added strength to her shattered frame and vigour to her brain, brought with it a pang, a still more vivid recollection of what she had lost, of the blank there must for the future be in her life.

But she lived, only her whole self was changed, and Dr. Charnock was right perhaps when he said to Dennis Vanstone that maybe it were better that she should die than live—life seemed a burden and weariness to her now. It was in vain Margery tried to interest her in household affairs or farm work. Nothing roused her, nothing could charm away the deep melancholy that possessed her, or soothe her wounded spirit.

"She goes about just like a ghost—so white and quiet!" said Margery, with the tears on her cheeks. "Her heart's broke, that's what it is, and she's always thinking, thinking, thinking, enough to trouble her poor brain again. Last night I saw her sitting on the terrace in the moonlight on the old seat there, and all of a sudden I saw her wring her hands and then clasp them together over her forehead and sit all of a heap on the seat, as it were. Ah! I know what she was thinking of. It was there she and Mr. Dennis used to sit o' nights in the summer before the foreign witch, his wife, got hold of him. She can't forget him even now, Dame Halsworthy; she loves him true as ever in spite of all his cruel treatment. Miss Hilda ain't one to change; she'll love him to the end, dame. No other man will ever win her heart from him, I'm fearing."

"Nay, she'll live and die a maid for certain," replied Mrs. Halsworthy, "and maybe she won't trouble this wicked world for long, Mrs. Margery; she's sealed for a better, to my way of thinking."

But as winter came Hilda seemed to take a turn for the better. Her fits of depression were less numerous and severe, and she began by degrees to return to her usual habits of life. The dairy and poultry yard were visited and superintended by her as before, and the garden inspected daily, and though Hilda seldom or never left her own grounds, or visited the houses of her neighbours, she gradually opened her doors to her old friends and resumed her intercourse with the outer world.

It was a hard, hard struggle at first to do this; the agony of meeting the curious glances and ill-timed sympathy and ill-judged condolence of awkward friends was almost more than she could bear, but when people found that she avoided all allusions to the past, never spoke of it herself or encouraged others to speak of it,

they dropped their attempts at consolation; some it is true remarking that Miss Ray was singularly reserved and cold, and didn't seem to care for anything, whilst others with keener insight into character saw how she strove to hide her wounds from the world, and respected her dignified reserve, and intruded their consolations on her no more.

"I must not be selfish," Hilda had thought to herself. "I can never be happy again myself, but I may be of use to some who are hardly less unhappy than I. I have lost what I loved most, and shall always love most on earth, but I have still much left to be thankful for. I must do my duty. There are many people dependent on me, I must not brood over my troubles if I can help it."

And she set herself again in sober earnest to her every-day work, and in two years' time to all outward appearances was reconciled to her lot in life and her lonely existence at the farm. No one knew, or perhaps guessed, at the inward struggles she had gone through, and she had been able to school herself to embrace her lot with submission and resignation; but the worst was over now, and she felt that there was still, after all she had lost, something yet worth living for.

At Stoneyville things had not gone as smoothly and pleasantly as could have been wished, and already there were strange tales afloat of quarrels and arguments between the hastily matched pair, and whispers concerning the eccentric conduct of the mistress of the manor, and the strange neglect of her shown by the master.

It was also said that the farming affairs were going wrong, the farm was neglected by its owner, that mortgages were being raised, and that "the missus spent more in a month than the master could make in a harvest time."

And truly Eleanor's start in life had not been one of the pleasantest. She had come down from London firmly resolved to lead the fashion, and to be queen in the little country place which she was to rule over. But she had been grievously disappointed. The neighbouring farmers' and yeomen's families would have naught to say to her—her former friends looked coldly on her, and for many weeks after her marriage no one but the clergyman of Hartford called on her, and he made an excuse for his wife's not accompanying him.

The first Sunday after their return from London she had arrayed herself in dainty attire and insisted on Dennis driving her in her pony carriage to Hartford church.

If she had wished to create a sensation there she certainly succeeded. As she swept up the aisle in her rustling silk dress and tiny lace bonnet every head was raised and every pair of eyes in the church was fixed on her; but the expression on the numerous faces was not one of either envy or admiration as Eleanor had fondly expected. No; some looked stern, some cold and contemptuous, some few amused. Lady Marsham put up her glasses and treated Eleanor to a glance of haughty contempt, whilst Lady Vivian, whom she met in the porch, whispered quite audibly that she was "terribly overdressed for a farmer's daughter."

Eleanor's face flushed crimson, and when she met Lady Marsham's coolly surprised stare she was glad to enter her high pew and hide herself from the public gaze behind the faded red silk curtains with which it was ornamented.

Coming out of church her case was worse. Several old acquaintances, friends of Hilda Ray's, gave her the cut direct, others gave her the stiffest possible bows, one or two, whom she had intended to speak to in a friendly and patronising manner, crossed the road when they saw her coming towards them, and the poor of the village formed a crowd around her carriage and were not at all sparing in their loudly uttered, disparaging remarks on herself, her husband, and their runaway match.

"Drive on, Dennis, these people are unbearable," she said, throwing herself back in the poneyhaise. "I would like to horsewhip them all."

"What is it? What are they saying,

Eleanor?" inquired Dennis, who, buried in deep thought, had escaped the arrows of sarcasm so abundantly showered on him and his wife.

"Saying! Can't you hear? You are always so absent now, Dennis. However, it was just as well you didn't hear perhaps," she replied, pettishly. "That old Lady Marsham—how she stared. Did you see her?"

"Stared, did she? Well, I thought women put on fine gowns and bonnets on purpose to be stared at," replied Dennis, looking perhaps for the first time with a scrutinising gaze at Eleanor's dress. "I don't wonder Hartford folks were a bit surprised at your gay attire, Eleanor. Why, this is the dress you went to the Crystal Palace flower show in?"

"Yes. Is that any reason I shouldn't wear it here?" replied Eleanor.

"I'm no judge of a lady's dress," he answered, quietly, "but I should have liked better to see you in a plain black silk gown, or something quieter than this at church."

"A black silk gown?" she retorted, angrily. "I! a bride! in a black silk gown! 'What are you thinking of, Dennis?'"

"Well—well," he replied, wearily, "you know best, I daresay. As I said before I know nothing of these things."

And then he thought of the dark grey silk Hilda and he had bought together for her travelling dress; the showy lilac silk beside him became odious in his eyes, and he turned his head away that he might see it no more.

So Eleanor found herself looked on very coldly by her neighbours, and, far from courting her society, they most unmistakably shunned her, and the dullness of her life served to render her naturally sharp temper still harsher, and the disappointment to her hopes of reigning supreme amongst the farmers and petty squires of Hartford and the neighbourhood made her irritable and wayward at home; and as months passed on Dennis became more and more estranged from her, and they were now seldom or never seen in each other's company.

Many months passed before Dennis and Hilda Ray met again. They mutually avoided each other, and indeed, except at church, there was not much chance of their coming across one another, and Dennis now rarely or never attended church at Hartford.

Mrs. Vanstone preferred driving into Garford and attending service in the large parish church there to sitting hidden behind the old red silk curtains in the little village church which Dennis had been accustomed to frequent from his earliest years, so that Hilda had scarcely set eyes on him during the two years since his marriage.

The first sight of her had sent a deadly pang of remorse through his soul. Could that wan, sad woman, still beautiful though she might be, really be his Hilda? He could hardly believe it, and his heart smote him and his soul yearned toward her, as hidden by an angle of the church he saw her walk slowly up the churchyard early on Sunday morning with a wreath of flowers in her hand, which she had prepared for her father's grave.

How he longed to follow her, to fall on his knees and beg her forgiveness, to pour forth all his love and grief and remorse at her feet; but it was impossible.

She would never know perhaps how much he repented, how daily and hourly the demon of remorse preyed on his soul, how he loved her, and spite of all his mad revenge and jealousy had ever in his secret soul loved her.

No, she would never know it. What good would it do if she did know it? The barrier between them was impassable indeed!

He turned away, he dared not watch her any longer, and seated himself on a tombstone close to the church tower, thinking bitterly of what might have been, when looking up suddenly he found himself face to face with the object of his thoughts with the girl who might have been his wife. She started, and a slight flush spread itself over her face, and for a moment she hesitated, and would have turned away, but Dennis sprang to his feet.

"Hilda!" he cried, in a voice of such agony

that she stopped and turned towards him at once. "Won't you—won't you speak to me?" One look at his miserable, yearning, wan face and she knew all. She knew he had been deceived, that he had never ceased to love her, that he loved her still.

For a moment a thrill of exquisite joy shot through her heart, but she checked the feeling instantly, and, holding out her hand to Dennis replied, calmly:

"Speak to you, Dennis! Yes, surely."

And she looked at him gravely and sadly, with eyes full of tenderness and pity, for the tokens of a bitterly wounded spirit, a heart ill-at-ease, indeed, were plainly visible on his countenance.

He seized her hand and held it a minute without speaking.

"You are an angel," at last he murmured.

"An angel, Hilda. Can you forgive—"

She withdrew her hand quietly.

"Nay, Dennis, let bygones be bygones; do not let us speak of the past. We must not, we cannot do it. Never let it be mentioned between us. We have both suffered; it is no use now to open old wounds. Let the past be past, and let us, when we do meet in future, be friends."

"Friends!" groaned Dennis. "Friends?"

"Yes," she answered, "friends. What can we be better, Dennis?"

"You are right," he replied, with bitter sadness, "that is all that is left to us now. But say one word, Hilda—say I am forgiven."

"Forgiven, fully and freely," she replied, solemnly; and gave him her hand again.

And then the organ pealed forth its solemn music, the bells ceased, and Hilda left him, and with eyes brimful of tears, half sorrowful, half tender, entered the sacred edifice to pray for him and bless him, and to thank God for the certainty that had been given her—that he knew the truth, knew that she had been ever true to him.

As the last fold of Hilda's black trailing robe disappeared within the church door, Dennis, who had watched her retreating form with yearning eyes, seated himself again beside the old tower, and almost the first tears he had shed since the day he had last parted with her bedewed his cheek; he dared not enter the church or trust himself in her presence again at that moment.

An angel! An angel she was in very truth; and as the sweet sounds of the chanting reached his ear from within the church he let his tears flow unchecked, and for a while his heart felt lighter and easier than it had done for many a long day.

A sharp, shrill voice broke in upon his reverie and awoke him to a full consciousness of the outer world again. Eleanor stood before him, accompanied by a neighbouring squire and his wife, recent additions to Hartford society.

"What, moralising amongst the tombs, Dennis?" she asked, mockingly; then observing the tears of emotion on his face she looked at him sharply. "Whom have you had to keep you company, I wonder? It must be dull amongst the mouldering old stones. Ah! I see," and her eyes fell on the fresh flowers on Daniel Ray's tomb, and on a lily that had fallen from Hilda's hand and lain unnoticed on the grass. She picked it up with an angry, viperish look. "I understand," she said, and nodded. "We make our little assignments at this romantic spot, and at this romantic hour. Mrs. Blackmore, what do you say to my husband's taste?"

"I never make assignments, Eleanor," replied Dennis, hotly. "I met Miss—"

Eleanor laid her hand on his mouth.

"No lady's name—no confession in public," she cried, with a harsh little laugh. "You can tell me all about it at home, you know."

"Nonsense! There is nothing to tell, Eleanor. I met Miss Ray and spoke to her, and—"

"There, that will do, don't blush so. Come along, Mrs. Blackmore, we are too late for church. I've asked Captain Grey of the Militia and young Stevenson to dinner; we may as well go home at once. Dennis can finish his inte-



[ILL-FATED LOVE.]

resting story to-night if I am not too tired to listen, or to-morrow. By the way, what a fright Miss Ray has grown, and she dresses always in that eternal black. Do you know her?"

"What, the handsome, sad-looking woman at Ray Farm?" said Mr. Blackmore. "Was there not some queer story—"

But Mrs. Blackmore pinched his arm warningly, Dennis blushed crimson, and Eleanor laughed sarcastically, and he saw there was something behind which he did not understand, and prudently turned off the conversation.

The party was a merry one, and it was late before Eleanor's guests drove away to their homes.

Eleanor was the gayest of the gay, and kept the whole company in the highest good humour by her mirth and light-heartedness. How their jokes and laughter jarred on Dennis's feelings. How he longed to be away from them and have time to indulge in his own thoughts in peace and quietness.

Eleanor's quick eye saw plainly enough how he was suffering, and she spared him not one pang it was in her power to inflict, and many were the sly allusions to his "churchyard rendezvous" and woe-begone looks to which she gave vent; but when the guests had departed her manner changed; she dropped her bantering, sarcastic tone, and with a brow black as night turned on Dennis, and in angry tones demanded an account of his meeting with Hilda.

He told her what had happened quietly, and without hiding from her his joy at finding that Hilda had forgiven him.

Eleanor's face grew blacker and blacker as he spoke, and when he had finished she turned on him in a fury.

"And you expect me to believe this fool's tale, do you, Dennis Vanstone? I am not so simple as you think me. Let me see you speaking to that woman again, and by Heavens I'll insult her in the public street the next time I meet her!"

"Fool's tales!" replied Dennis, scornfully. "No, it is I, not you, who believe fool's tales,

Eleanor; and let me see you dare to say one word to an angel like Hilda Ray, and I'll— Psha! what is the use of quarrelling, Eleanor? For goodness' sake let's lead a quiet life, at any rate. You don't care a pin for me, I know, and I—well, I suppose I care as much for you, as you imagined I did when I married you. I don't fancy you deceived yourself, or were deceived on that point, and now I know I have been the victim of a 'fool's tale,' as you call it. So you may imagine how my love for you is increased by that knowledge. But we are tied together, Eleanor, and it would be as well to endure our lot quietly. I try to believe you did not know your tale was a falsehood, or—"

Eleanor gave a short, low laugh, and then, as she met his glance, trembled.

"What?" he cried. "Did you know?" and he advanced a step or two towards her.

She shrank back pale and terrified.

"By heavens!" he cried, taking one of her slender wrists in his strong hand. "If I thought you had lied to me purposely you should die this moment!" and he looked into her face with blazing eyes.

"Dennis, Dennis, you hurt me!" muttered she, feebly trying to release her arm. "No, I knew nothing—I know nothing now."

He dropped her arm and hurried away.

"Well for you you did not," he replied, and without another word he left her and retired to his own apartment.

Half frightened at his violence she fell back sick and faint with a newly-born terror. If he ever did learn the truth what would her fate be? She hardly dared think.

"If I had a father or brother he would not dare to treat me so," she thought, indignantly; "but I have none—no one to protect me," and for a time she tried to persuade herself that Dennis was a brute, and that she was very cruelly treated by him, but even to herself she could not keep up the deception long.

She felt that if he should ever discover the truth she would have no right to reproach him, however hardly he might deal with her.

After a while her sobs ceased and she lay on the sofa with a tear-stained face and a dejected air till the door opened and Dennis entered again. She started, and a shiver of terror agitated her, and she looked fearfully up into his face; it was sad and downcast.

"I've come to beg your pardon, Eleanor," he said, in a low, hopeless voice. "I had no right to be so violent and to speak to you as I did just now."

She gave a little sob and turned her head away. Seeing him repentant her spirits rose again.

"Won't you forgive me, Eleanor?" he said, gently.

"Certainly," she replied, coldly, "if you will promise me not to be seen in that person's company again."

"In whose company—in Hilda's?" he said, in surprise.

"In Miss Ray's," replied she, emphasising the "miss" remarkably. "You cannot suppose that it is very agreeable for me to find my husband in company with an old love, making assignations with her and—"

Dennis clasped his hands with a sigh.

"I tell you it was an accidental meeting, Eleanor. I had no idea I should fall in with her when I went into the churchyard, or I would have kept away. It was not for that that I begged your pardon, it was for my violence just now," and he touched her wrist.

"Psha!" she replied, pettishly, pulling her arm away. "That is of no matter; I'm not so fragile as all that."

He sighed.

"Well, Eleanor, I've made my apology, so I hope you've forgiven me," he said.

"Forgiven you, of course," she replied.

But she almost turned away her face as he stooped to kiss her, and he felt that the distance between them was now greater than ever, and walked sadly and silently away.

(To be Continued.)



[BEAUTY'S PRAISE.]

THE STRANDED SHIP.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

MY DARLING.

SAD memories! Ay, the saddest that can ever come to a man, and laden with the bitterness of tears that have wept themselves out and left the heart yearning that only death can still. Not without hope; I think in all humility that I shall see my darling when I have passed the river and reached the golden gates. I think then I shall know the reason of the sorrow that came to me when the world seemed all before me, and happiness promised to be my portion till we—Mabel and I—went hand in hand to the dark shore together.

It seems but yesterday, those bright days of dreams and sunshine, and yet it is many a long day now since my sorrow came. Our white-haired queen was a young, happy wife then, with fair children round her, and a loving husband to share her royal cares and anxieties as well as her joys and triumphs.

A glorious summer day, with the golden sun shining down on this nether world as if he would warm and cheer the very wretchedest into something like life and happiness; a day when the pimpernels in the fields opened their little red eyes to the fullest extent, and almost burst off their petals in their efforts to expand and tell the country people who believed in them that the rain was still far off, and that field work might be gone on with in safety and comfort; a day when the winged world enjoyed itself and the gleamy beetles promenaded in the heat, and conscious that there would be no clouds and no wet to spoil their coats and make their joyous

world blank and dark; a day when the birds sang their very loudest, and the southing breeze only rustled the tree-tops and made its way into corners and hedgerows, as if to tell the sun that it was well to temper his radiance a little.

And in the midst of all the beauty and gladness of the dumb world, amidst the fairest flowers that Nature's hand ever scattered broadcast over the fields and lanes, a boy lay face downwards on the hot ground, crying as if his heart would break. A lithe, healthy lad, decently clad, and with no special good looks except a pair of large, dark eyes, all swollen now and blurred with hot tears.

He took no notice of anything but his own grief, and the birds as they flew down now and then wondered perhaps in their little minds what anyone could be crying for in such an eminently safe and comfortable place as the corner of Farmer Doublechick's great meadow, and a hare, as she peeped out from her safe shelter and finally crept past him, satisfied that he was harmless at present at least, might have put the question to herself what could possibly afflict anyone so deeply when there were neither guns nor dogs about?

The boy stopped his weeping at last, worn out perhaps, comforted certainly by the girlish relief of tears which were the outcome of a great passion. He had been harshly treated, falsely accused, and made to bear the burden of another person's wrong-doing, and he was all alone. Not twelve months since he had had father and mother both and a home where he was loved and tended.

"Molly coddled" was Farmer Doublechick's word for it when the catastrophe came, and his sister's orphan child was thrown on his hands to keep or send to the workhouse, as he saw fit. Shame prevented his doing the latter. He was a man who loved to stand well with his neighbours; but the boy would have found gentler treatment and kinder friends in the parish refuge than he met with in the house of his mother's only brother.

True, the worthy farmer had been a great loser

by the misfortunes of his parents, but the ruin had cost them both their lives; for his father, unable to bear the consequences of his folly, had consigned his wife and child to the mercy of the world, and taken himself out of it by a suicide's death.

Scarce three months and his partner in life was laid beside him in the grave; the shock had killed her, and the boy who lay there weeping on this summer afternoon was left alone and penniless. His uncle gave him a shelter—he dared not refuse that much; but he never let an hour pass without making the unhappy child feel his position and giving him to understand that he was a beggar. No matter how he strove, nothing he did was right. His uncle and his fine lady wife seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in torturing him, and on this day he had been severely beaten for something which the spoiled son of the house had done and persistently denied afterwards.

He had made up his mind he would endure it no longer; he would run away. He had two shillings, how hardly saved from chance gifts only he himself knew, and he would make them the beginning of his fortunes. He had heard of men who had risen from nothing, who had begun life on less than his precious hoard, and what other boys had done he could surely do. He had health and strength, and to break stones on the road for parish pay would be better than to lead the life he had been leading at the farm.

Other people could have told him that he was quite as fit to go out into the world as many a man. He had been put to man's work and made to labour till he could almost equal the men who took his uncle's weekly wages, and his defection would be no small loss to the greedy and hard-hearted farmer.

His burst of passionate tears over, he lifted his head and dried his eyes, feeling glad that there had been no one to see his foolishness, as he called it. It might have been called by a better name, for the outcome saved him from doing something desperate in his mad anger.

"I will go to-night," he said to himself, clenching his hands and setting his teeth. "They will not miss me till the morning, and then I shall have put a good many miles between me and this place. My mother's brother! I can hardly believe it sometimes; I cannot think that that fiend in human shape, for he is nothing else, and my gentle mother were the children of the same parents. Oh, mother, mother, if you could see me now!"

And at the words and the thought of his mother, and the good and gentle life he had led under her tuition, his tears welled forth again; not so vehemently now, for they were prompted by a softer passion—the memory of lost love and care.

"Don't cry, poor boy! Why are you crying?"

He started and lifted his face at the words. The speaker had come up noiselessly, and he was not aware he was observed. He was terribly ashamed, but there was nothing but the gentlest pity in the sweet face that gazed fearlessly into his.

A little child of not more than five years old was standing in front of him, a fairy-like creature, with big, gazelle-like eyes and a sweet, baby face that was as full of pretty changes of expression as the shifting clouds that passed across the sun from time to time.

She was daintily dressed, at least she had been, but her embroidered frock was torn and trailing now, and her pretty hat hung down her back in woeeful plight; her pinafore was full of wild flowers, and she looked the very embodiment of a child wood nymph.

"Why do you cry?" she asked again. "Has your mamma been angry with you?"

"I have no mamma, little lady," the boy said, in wonderment at her and her appearance.

"Nor no papa?"

"No."

She looked at him in amazement. A world where there was no papa and mamma was beyond her comprehension as yet.

"Why haven't you got any?" she asked.

"Because they are dead," the boy replied, and the tears rose to his eyes again, and then he looked at the child and wondered where she came from and where her nurses might be.

There were tokens of wealth about her, her clothes were of the finest, and her air, baby though she was, was that of a child accustomed to be considered and waited on.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From papa's house," the child replied, gravely.

"Yes, but where is that? Who is your papa?"

"Papa is Mr. Squire, and he lives at the great house, over there," and she described a sweep of twenty miles or so with her little hands, letting all her flowers drop in the eagerness of her explanation. "Everybody calls papa squire."

A light began to dawn on the boy's mind. Could she mean the squire—Squire Beechcroft, the richest and proudest man in all the country side, his uncle's landlord?

"Is it Mr. Beechcroft?" he asked.

"Yes," the little one replied, promptly. "Take me home, please, I can't find them."

"Can't find who?" he queried, wondering more than ever at this self-possessed mite with the sunny curls and the baby form.

"Mary and the rest," she answered. "They said I wasn't to go away, but I did, and—"

The courage began to fail and the rosy lips to quiver.

"Don't cry," he said; "I know, I will take you back. Shall I carry you?"

"Please."

It was a long way, and his burden was not light, and more than once he had to set her down and rest during their progress. She was a fearless little creature, and chattered to him as if she had known him all her baby life.

"What is your name?" he asked her, in one of these intervals of repose.

"Mabel," she answered, the sweet name falling from her lips with added prettiness. "Papa calls me 'Queen Mab,' mamma says I am more like Puck. Who was Puck?"

This was more than her guide could answer,

He was not learned in Shakespeare, and she went on:

"Puck was something very naughty," she averred, gravely. "It is when I am mischievous that mamma says I am Puck."

Poor little Queen Mab was almost asleep when her bearer arrived at the gate of the Beechcroft grounds, and was received by a party of terrified people setting out to scour the country in search of the lost fairy queen. Hardly knowing where he was going he was dragged into the presence of the squire, the most formidable personage in the neighbourhood, who shook him by the hand and asked his name and introduced him to a lady, weeping for very joy, who called him her child's preserver, and promised to make his future her care.

He was feasted and made much of, and "Queen Mab" put her little arms round his neck and kissed him with all her heart, and he left the house with a sovereign in his pocket, and the weight that had been on him in the field all gone.

He did not go back to his uncle's house, but started away to begin the world from the threshold of Mabel Beechcroft's home with the memory of the beautiful child weaving itself into all his day dreams and making a bright spot in the shadowy darkness of the unknown world before him.

And that was how my love for my darling began, for I, Robert Ernscliffe, was the boy who had been crying on the warm grass of the field, and Mabel Beechcroft, the little woodland fairy, the child I carried home in my arms on the most eventful day of my life, was my love whom I worshipped and loved, whom I shall mourn all my life through till it pleases Heaven to set me by her side once more in the land where there is no parting nor tears.

CHAPTER II.

AS THE YEARS WENT BY.

I NEVER saw my uncle's farm again after that summer day. I went my way and made a place for myself in the world. Fortune was very kind to me, and I happened, as so few do, to get into the right groove.

I was some time in the busy world of London, striving with all my might to get something that should keep me from starvation, before I found a place as errand boy in a print-seller's warehouse.

It was such unheard-of audacity for a friendless, nameless lad, without anyone to give him a word of recommendation, to go into great shops and ask if a boy was wanted, and my last halfpenny was spent ere I found anyone willing to listen to me.

Gazing into a print shop one dreary afternoon very hungry and footsore, for my boots were worn out and I had no means of getting any more, but still interested, as I always was in pictures, and forgetting my misery in the sight of a fine copy of one of the best Academy pictures of the year, I became conscious that a gentleman was regarding me attentively from the shop door.

He was a sharp-faced man, with a keen eye, and called to me somewhat roughly.

"What are you doing there?"

"Looking at that," I answered, and lifted myself from the window-sill where I had been leaning, somewhat wearily, I suppose, for he caught me by the arm and shook me on to my feet.

"What's the matter?" he asked, in the same quick way.

"I'm hungry," I replied, feeling now for the first time how faint and sick I was.

Another keen glance at me, I suppose to see how far I was speaking the truth, and then Mr. Postlethwaite pushed me round a corner into a side street and into a shop.

"Here, give this lad some dinner," he said. "Nothing greasy and rich, mind; something wholesome. He's starving, I suspect."

How near starving was shown by my burst-

ing into feeble tears and crying as if my heart would break. A dinner! It was a long time since I had tasted one, and this curious, sharp-spoken gentleman seemed to me like a good angel dropped down from the clouds to help me.

He scrutinised the food that was set before me, cavilled at the price of it, and watched me eat, with many an injunction not to eat too fast at first.

"Many a man has been saved from the devil by a good dinner," he said. "I don't say you were going that way, but an empty stomach is a good preparation for the journey."

I told him I was going to the workhouse, and he listened patiently while I explained to him who I was and how I wanted something to do.

"Have you run away from your friends?" he asked, abruptly. "Never encourage that sort of thing."

"Not from my friends," I replied, warmly. "I have not a friend in the world. I am an orphan."

"And you are not anybody's apprentice?"

"No, sir."

"Any relation to Ralph Ernscliffe, of Bloomsbury Square?" He has been dead some time now, and— Bless my soul, what is the matter with the boy?"

I was crying again, with choking sobs that would not be suppressed, for he had named my father's name, and the old house in Bloomsbury Square—a mansion once when this century was young—had been my dear old home where I had passed my happy childhood, and where I had learned to love all that was beautiful in art and nature. My father had made such things his hobby, and they had brought him ruin as they bring it to many.

I explained when I could speak, and Mr. Postlethwaite put his hand kindly on my shoulder.

"I know where I can make inquiries about you," he said, "if you are Ralph Ernscliffe's boy. See, here is the price of a night's lodging. Do you know where to find one?"

I told him I did, and he bade me go to his place at ten the next morning.

"If your story is true you will be there," he said, shortly. "If it is not, I shall never see your face again, I know that, and you will have made me mistrust the next boy I feel inclined to help, that's all."

I needn't say I was there punctually, as tidy as I had the means to be, and as clean as soap and water would make me. I had to wait a long time, but I was put into a room all hung round with unsaleable stock, pictures and prints that had had their turn in the shop window, and whose creators had perhaps gone out of fashion with their works, and the time seemed to fly while I was looking at them.

Presently Mr. Postlethwaite came, and I was questioned severely as to my antecedents.

"I know what became of the Ernscliffe boy," he said. "Let me hear the story from you."

I told him everything that had happened to me, and he listened attentively, looking at me with eyes that seemed to read me through.

"I ought to send you back," he said, gravely. "Think how your kind relations will be grieving after you."

Almost on my knees I begged him not to betray me—not to send me back.

"I would rather go to prison," I told him, "than back to the farm."

And he bade me be of good cheer; I should not be sent back if I behaved myself.

"I think you have the makings of something better than a ploughboy in you," he said, in his brusque fashion.

And that was how I made my first start in London life. The discovery that I had some talent in etching led to my being taken from my errand boy's duties and put to something better, and by the time I was eighteen I was earning a fair living and making slow though sure progress to a good position.

I painted a little, and had ambitious dreams of seeing my works on the walls of the Academy some time in the hazy future.

I had left my old life behind me some five years when I saw my little wood nymph again. I had never forgotten her; every feature of her baby face was printed on my memory, and I used to wonder whether we should ever meet.

One day in the park I chanced to be just in time to save a little girl from a fall from her pony. It was in the morning when juvenile equestrians congregate, and the child was with her father, who was talking to some friends when the accident occurred.

One of the imps who seem created for nothing else in the world except to make themselves obnoxious started the pony with a wild yell, purposely, as it seemed to me, and the little lady would have been unseated in a moment if I had not seen what was going to happen and caught the pony by the rein and her in my arms.

It was all over in a minute, and her father, hurriedly dismounting, turned to me with a face that I knew. It was Mr. Beechcroft, and the scared little fairy with the golden hair I was holding in my arms was the tiny child of five years ago.

"I have seen you before," the squire said, looking at me with a puzzled look.

"Yes," I replied, "when Miss Beechcroft was lost once. I am happy to have been of service to her again."

"I was sure I had seen you," he said, shaking me warmly by the hand. "I never forget a face, and yours is a remarkable one, and has only grown a little older. You don't remember him, Mab; you were too young."

"I wasn't, papa. It's that boy—my boy—grown older. I remember how I cried because he went away. Oh, I am so glad to see him again!"

And she was, there was no doubt of it. She was just as much a child now as she had been then in some things, as she always was, blisser, till the day when I saw her for the last time on this earth, just the same sweet, guileless creature whose innocence and purity the very angels might envy.

Mr. Beechcroft asked me a good many questions about myself and my position, and bade me come to his house in Wilton Crescent.

"He would like to see more of me," he was good enough to say.

Ought I to have done what I did, I wonder? Would it have been better if I had never accepted that frank and friendly invitation? Heaven alone knows; and Heaven alone knows what suffering as well as pleasure it caused me.

I saw Mabel Beechcroft growing up, and I learned to love her as the time went on, and I grew more sure of my own worldly position, as a man only loves once in his life. I don't know when it began—while she was still a child, I think—I only know that her image was with me in all my struggles for position and fame. And the fame came at last, and all the art world was talking of the picture of the year—"The Lost Lamb"—by the rising young artist, Robert Ernscliffe.

It was only the boy with the child in his arms turning in at the gate of her father's park, but the critics were pleased, and the public taste was hit, and the royal guest at the Academy dinner was pleased to say that of all the pictures on the walls that one pleased him most, and to offer to buy it from the cotton lord for whom it was painted.

My fortune was made—twenty fortunes if I could have taken all the commissions that were offered me—and she was presented that year, the fairest beauty of the season, and her mother told me at the private view that they were arranging a marriage for her with the Duke of Tintagel.

She did not know—how should she?—that her words seemed to take the life out of me, and make the rooms, with their gay, fluttering occupants, heave and whirl round me as I stood.

I don't know that I had ever hoped to marry her till then.

I had made my home in the soft palace of the fairy future, as Claude Melnotte has it, and had peopled all my life with her sweet image.

I had never told her of my love—who was I that I should aspire to the heaven of such a bliss?—but I had dreamed and vaguely hoped, and now she was to be married to another.

She herself came to me before I had recovered my scattered wits, in all the pride and glamour of her beauty, and put her hand in mine—how should she know that it sent a thrill through all my veins and nearly drove me mad?—and thanked me for having made her baby face so pretty.

She would have the very first engraving that was made of the picture, she said. And then she walked away on the Duke of Tintagel's arm, and blank darkness fell on all my hopes and aspirations with the last flutter of her dress, the last sound of her footsteps.

"I had overworked myself," people said, when I found I could do no more work for the present. "I ought to go abroad and recruit. The strain of excitement and anxiety had been too much for me."

I heard them all in silence. I knew that nothing ailed me but the thought of the duke and his good fortune, but I took the general advice and stayed away.

"How long are you going to stay?" Mrs. Beechcroft asked me, when I took leave of her.

And I answered, quietly:

"Till Miss Beechcroft is married."

She looked at me a moment, and then took my hand. She understood me thoroughly.

"Thank you for going," she said. "Does she know?"

"God forbid," I replied, "and keep her from the knowledge for ever. Will you tell her I said 'God bless her' before I went away?"

She pressed my hand in silence, and with the knowledge of her sweet compassion I passed away out of their lives as I thought for ever.

CHAPTER III.

LOST.

HAVE you ever felt the mal du pays, reader? ever known what it was to sicken for a sight of the cliffs of old England till it seemed as if the world itself would be well lost for the sake of treading once more on English soil—for the joy of home life and home associations?

I used to wonder what it meant. I can understand it now, for I, Robert Ernscliffe—without a tie to bind me to my native land, without a friend in England save those whom kind fortune had raised up for me—had the fever in its worst phase as soon as the sea was between me and my old pursuits.

And it was not all Mabel Beechcroft. There was a sharp pain at my heart whenever I thought of her and my own foolish daydream—it was literally the longing for my own land.

I had hard work to conquer it. I was actually ill, and the physicians whom I had to consult one and all advised me to go home. But I would not, and at length I found distraction in my art.

I flitted hither and thither over the Continent sketching, and building up facts and fancies for future work, but I am afraid I could find no satisfactory female models for the rough drafts of my figure pictures. They were none of them like the only face that was in my thoughts, and I gave up the idea of more than one subject in despair.

I suppose every artist has his ideal, and that the love of a man's life makes itself known through his handiwork. An artist in Rome, a man of no mean talent, but who got his living by painting backgrounds and helping in any way that offered in the studios of more successful men, remarked upon my portfolio one day.

"I know her," he said, quietly.

"Know whom?" I asked.

"The lady who has sent you abroad."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, no offence. Only I have seen it so often

—not her face, don't think that, but the symptoms. This is Miss Beechcroft."

"How do you know her?"

"She was in Rome last year, and came about the studios a good deal; and she is going to be married, the papers have published so much; and I find her face on every bit of spare paper in your cases. I don't think it is difficult to guess the rest."

"You are right and wrong. I have never presumed to address Miss Beechcroft in the way you fancy. Her father is my very kind friend, and our acquaintance was made when the young lady was almost a baby; it is quite natural I should sketch a very pretty face that I have good reason to remember."

"It is a pretty face, but not striking enough to be transferred to paper every day to the exclusion of all others. You will never be a good figure painter if you keep always to the same model. Besides—"

"Besides what?"

"I have no business to talk to you at all on the subject," the old man replied, "but I am interested in you. You are like a son I lost."

I liked this old man, and pitied his disappointed, broken life, for such I knew well it was, and I liked him to take to me.

"Go on, Mr. Lambert," I said, "say what you please; but, believe me, I have told you the simple truth. Miss Beechcroft is nothing to me."

"That's not your fault," he said, somewhat drily. "I was like you, Mr. Ernscliffe. I left England for the sake of a woman; God knows I loved her, and she came to know it, worse luck, afterwards. She was to be married as this young lady is, and to about as heartless a fellow. I know something of the Duke of Tintagel. He is a hard man, and I would as soon see a daughter of mine in her grave as married to him. But that's neither here nor there. My darling was sold to a brute who ill-treated her, and when I could get to her I did, and she ran away with me."

He stopped and wiped his face as if the very recollection were too much for him, and then went on:

"I thought I had the world at my feet as you have now, and that my private affairs would not interest those on whom my business depended. But I lived to find myself a social Pariah, and to see my darling die of the misery my love had caused her. The world turned its back upon us. 'It would not do,' people said. 'Her husband was a man of position, and I, the sinner, was only an artist fellow.' So they kicked me out, and here I am, when perhaps I might have held the position that is waiting for you if you follow up the success of 'The Lost Lamb.' I don't often tell my story to my employers, but when I saw the one face in every page of your portfolio I knew what it meant. Don't let a woman spoil your life as my darling did mine."

I longed to ask him what he knew about the Duke of Tintagel, but I would not own to so much interest in the future husband of Mabel Beechcroft.

I was not offended with him; on the contrary, I rather liked his quaint confidence. I knew quite well that what had happened to him would never happen to me; I should never try to tempt my darling from her duty. But his advice was good; I had been making a fool of myself, and I resolved from that hour to try, at least, to put her image out of the way of my work if not out of my heart.

I heard from other people what manner of man the duke was. He was strictly well-behaved and gentlemanly, but hard and uncompromising, not the husband for a gentle girl with a loving nature like Mabel Beechcroft's.

He would be just to the very utmost degree, but he would make no concessions, a model nobleman, a just landlord, a scrupulous master, but a man without any warmth of heart.

I thought of Mabel and her gentle, loving disposition, her fondness for all dumb things, and her passionate attachment to her parents, and I wondered and dreaded how she would fare in the power of such a man.

She would be like a mouse in the clutches of

a cat, poor darling, and would find out too late perhaps what a mistake she had made in electing to be Duchess of Tintagel.

Surely the warm-hearted squire and his wife could have no idea what sort of a man they were giving their daughter to, or it might be that they were blinded by the splendour of the match, for the duke had been the most eligible young man about town for three seasons, and had not thrown the handkerchief to anyone.

Anyway, the matter was settled, and I could do nothing but keep abroad till the only woman I should ever love in this lower world was married and away.

I was in Athens drinking in with all an artist's delight the splendour of the world of beauty there, past and present, when I came upon an English newspaper. I had not seen one for some time, and I seized it with the avidity that only a traveller can understand and hastily ran through the news. One paragraph that I came upon all too soon made me stare at it like a man in a dream.

"DEATH of Henry Beechcroft, Esq., of Beechcroft, Worcestershire."

It set forth that the squire had died with awful suddenness, having been found dead in his room at his town residence in Wilton Crescent. It further stated that the death was doubtless due to the misfortunes which had overtaken him, and which, I gathered from the few words said about them, to have been absolute ruin, or something very little short of it.

There was all a penny-a-liner's tendency to make the most of things in the paragraph, but I could see from the style of it that it only followed others; the ruin must be public by now, that was very evident, and the match with the duke broken off. There was no doubt about it the paper said; the duke had left England, and the effects of the deceased gentleman were to be sold for the benefit of his creditors forthwith.

No word of the widow and her daughter. Where were they I wondered as I read the heartless words that told me of their ruin and the death of their protector? where was bonny little Queen Mab and her gentle mother?

Were they cast upon the world and left to the mercy of relations—the very weakest reed to lean upon at all times—worthless, as a rule, in time of trouble? They had not many to rely upon, I knew that much, and in an hour I had packed up my portmanteau and was speeding to the station to catch a steamer that would take me part of the way to England at least.

I might be able to do something, Heaven alone knew what, to help these good friends out of their difficulty. I had no selfish thought in the matter. I can lay my hand on my heart and say now with all truth that I only wanted to help my darling and her mother in their strait.

I hurried across France and reached Calais in what seemed even to me an incredibly short time. Waiting for my boat I watched the arrival of the English packet with its load of seasick misery, and thought I recognised two figures that came wearily up the steps as if they were a little uncertain what to do next.

In an instant I was beside them—Mabel Beechcroft and her mother—both of them looking so pale and wan that I might have fancied myself looking at the ghosts of the happy, brilliant women I had left only a few months before.

They were alone and heartily glad to see me. They were going to Paris, they told me, where Mrs. Beechcroft had some relations, and somehow I gathered without being told in so many words that their welcome would be of the coolest.

"Of course you have heard?" Mabel said, as, with her mother's hand resting on my arm, we made for the nearest hotel.

"Yes," I replied. "All that a newspaper paragraph could tell me; it was not much, but it was enough to send me back to England to see if I could do anything."

"You were coming to help us?"

"Of course I was. Nothing but the news I read the other day would have brought me back. Don't speak of your sorrow. The duke—"

"I gave him his freedom of course," she said, somewhat proudly. "It would not have done. He would have had me be his wife in spite of all."

"And he accepted his dismissal?"

"He said he thought I had acted nobly, and wished me well. It is best as it is."

I need not tell here of the course of my wooing, nor how I managed to help the forlorn pair, for surely women were never left more helpless on this cruel earth.

The poor squire had been culpably negligent, and had entered into speculations at the instigation of others which he did not understand, so that when the crash came and he was ruined he was liable for far more than he actually possessed, and died of the pain and humiliation that came with the ruin.

His widow and daughter were forgotten, as unfortunate people very often are, and in their poverty and desolation it came about that I could help and cheer them. It was some time before I could make Mabel understand that it was not for the sake of helping them that I wanted her for my wife.

But her mother knew why I went abroad, and I had her on my side. So, by and bye, one summer evening, in my studio at Hampstead where she had come with her mother, she told me she believed she had loved me all the time, and she would come and be my house's mistress whenever I liked.

There was some little delay about it. One of their French relatives had died, and there was a tiny fortune to come to my Mabel, enough to make her comfortable about the dear mother whom she had been helping ever since their misfortunes by teaching, etc.

One or other of the ladies had to go to France about the business, and Mrs. Beechcroft was in a state of health that made her doing so an impossibility, so it was Mabel who undertook the journey.

She went under safe escort, and informed us of her arrival, and of her being comfortable, then of the business being all settled, and the money transferred to her name in an English bank. Then that she was coming home with a gentleman and his wife who had come from Australia and were visiting England for the first time for thirty years. They had known her father, and she had met them accidentally, and hearing her name had asked if she were his daughter. They were coming home via Calais, and the day was named.

That letter was the last. I went to Dover to meet the boat—my darling was not there, and from that hour we heard no more, she was as utterly lost to us as if she had gone out of the world altogether.

No one in Paris knew anything of her except that she had been there and was gone. She had not mentioned with whom she was going home, nor could anything be found out about the movements of the Mr. and Mrs. Freemantle that she mentioned in her letter. They had been at an hotel in the city, and had come from Australia, but they had gone away again and made no sign.

CHAPTER IV.

FOUND.

I AM an old man now and my hair is white with the snows of many years and much care, but I cannot even now think of that time of despair and weary, helpless waiting without a lump in my throat and hot tears in my eyes.

No news, not one word, and the days went on into weeks and the weeks made themselves into months and dragged by till a year was gone, and still there was no sign, not one word to tell what had become of Mabel Beechcroft.

The stay of the Freemantles in Paris had been so short and their doings of so little importance, and the troublous times that were settling down on the French capital of so much more moment than any private affairs, that they were quite

forgotten, and I could not get even a description of them.

We advertised in all the Australian papers, and received answers. There were such people. It was something to know that, and they had held a good position in the colony, but no one had heard anything of them since they started for England. And at the end of a year Mrs. Beechcroft began to droop.

The hope deferred was more than she could bear, and she died in my arms on the anniversary of the day on which Mabel had come to me and promised to be my wife.

She had been with me ever since, poor lady, and I had done my best to be a son to her and to make her saddened life as happy as I might. And her last words to me were a blessing for me and a message of love to her daughter if by any miracle she should be restored to me.

"But I need not say it," she said, "I shall see her. She has gone before me, I know it. My child will welcome me on the other side—the other side," she murmured, faintly.

And then she went to sleep as I thought, and would not move for fear of disturbing her, but the nurse motioned to me to lay her down.

"Nothing will disturb her any more," she said.

And she was right. She was dead, poor lady, and knew now what had befallen her child.

I suppose I had had a great strain on me. I had hardly felt it then, but after the funeral all the life and spirit seemed to go out of me and I could not settle to work. I had painted in a feverish sort of fashion all through the time of our search and anxiety, pictures that pleased the public taste and fetched their money, but I knew very well that they were not work that would live, or if they did that they would be regarded in a few years as things of a distorted imagination, and not the steady production of a painstaking artist.

But I broke down so completely now that I was laid upon a sick bed. With Mrs. Beechcroft's death hope seemed to die also. I never quite knew how much I had hoped till then, and the doctors told me that if I did not get away from London I should die. Not from England, I would not hear of it. I would go to some seaside place if they liked, but no further. I think I had a morbid notion that I should die, and that it mattered very little where I went so that I was let alone to die in peace.

I chose Grange Harbour, or someone else did for me, I don't know which. Anyway I went there, and tried with all my might to do as I was bid and think of nothing.

Grange Harbour was a pretty little place with wild rocks behind it and blue sea in front, and air the most delicious that human lungs ever inhaled.

I really felt better before I was there a day. It was a new sensation to enjoy anything as I enjoyed the laziness of the little beach and the purity and cleanliness of the atmosphere and everything connected with the town and its surroundings.

One thing I noticed that worried me somewhat. I always dreamed of my lost darling. She was always present with me in the dark hours, and I was certain in these dreams that she was dead.

They did not frighten me, these visions. They filled me with expectation somehow, and yet I knew there was no hope of ever seeing Mabel more.

Another thing that troubled me at Grange Harbour was a sunken ship very close in shore. She had been driven there in a terrible storm from the south-east, and there was no possibility of getting rid of her. It was impossible to blow her up, for the explosion would have shattered half the place, and she had wedged herself so firmly in the sand that to move her was equally out of the question.

At high water she was covered all but the tiniest tip of a broken mast. At low water, and the tide went out a long way at Grange Harbour, she was visible from end to end, a gruesome, ghastly-looking object, being washed slowly to pieces by the waves. I heard all about her from the people about the beach. The

wreck had happened just about the time of my great trouble, and I had only a vague recollection of the loss of the *Esperance*. She was a French ship from Brest, and only two lives had been lost, the captain and the steward. Everyone else had been brought on shore, the stewardess badly hurt, but alive.

I don't know why this melancholy-looking wreck came to have such an interest for me, but its fascination was terrible. It grew upon me and drew me to the beach in front of it till I wondered to see the people sauntering about so carelessly, and the little children playing so merrily with such a nightmare so near. I think the boatmen and sailors thought me a little mad when I took a boat and was rowed out to the wreck to look at it.

There was nothing to see, they said, the ship was only a great shell full of sand—had been nothing else since another great storm some months after she was wrecked, which had torn off her decks and washed away the rest of her bulwarks.

I went and was satisfied there was nothing, but the fascination of the ship was as great as ever. I began to think that I was wrong to stay at Grange Harbour, and that I had better choose some other abiding-place till my health grew stronger.

I had been sitting on the shore as I always did, gazing at the sunken ship, and weaving in my own mind all sorts of stories about her and her luckless passengers, most of whom had lost all their belongings, and the desire to go out to her again grew so strong that I jumped from my seat with muttered resolve to get away the very next day.

"Bah! I am growing a monomaniac," I said to myself. "Why should I think any more of that mass of rubbish yonder than anyone else does? I'll get away, and at once. To-morrow morning shall see the last of me at Grange Harbour."

I did not go the next day, nor for many a day after. I went to bed that night, but not to sleep, the craving to go to that sunken ship was greater than ever, and in restless despair I dressed myself after a miserable two hours and went down to the sea.

It was a glorious night, the moon was flooding everything else with silver radiance, and making sea, earth and sky look all like a piece of fairy land. I had never seen anything so beautiful, and I sat down on the beach wondering if anyone would think me quite mad for such a curious proceeding.

Grange Harbour was a very quiet little place, and its respectable inhabitants were not accustomed to such vagaries on the part of visitors. The tide was out, and the ship was full in sight, rising ghastly and bare from the silvery sand. She was close in shore, I could almost have thrown a stone into her from where I sat. Certainly I could from another strip of sand which the tide had left bare, and which was easily reached at low water, though there was a broad pool between it and the shore.

The ship had made that, they told me, since she had settled down there, and unless she went to pieces there would be soon a great bar of sand, and eventually the beach would be twice as wide as it was now.

I was thinking of all this and watching the play of the moonlight upon the waves, when suddenly I saw my lost darling standing on the shattered deck of that stranded steamer!

I am a sane man now while I write these lines. I was a sane man then when I saw the sight that dictated them. Standing there in the bright moonlight, clinging to the broken mast, was Mabel Beechcroft with an aspect of wild terror in her face and an appealing look towards me as if asking me why I had not come to her aid.

She wore the same dress that she had worn when I took her in my arms to bid her good bye as she started on that fatal journey. She was my darling herself in all but that look of wild despair.

For some time, I did not count it by minutes

or seconds, I watched her, and then she was gone and there was nothing but the moonlight and the tide beginning to come up and cover the ship's sides.

I knew it all now. I understood that Mabel must have been in that ship and I comprehended why I had dreamed of her so constantly at Grange Harbour and why I took such a terrible fancy to the scene of the wreck.

I am not ashamed to write this. There are many people who will think me fit only for a lunatic asylum when they read my story, but whatever caused it, how ever my fancy came about, it is true. I saw my darling on the deck of that stranded ship as plainly as I see anything in my daily walks, and she was there, down in that treacherous sea where she had met her fate, and the waves had covered her ever since till fate or providence, or whatever it is that shapes the ends of man, had taken me to Grange Harbour to find out for myself what had become of her.

The authorities of the town were very near having me locked up for a lunatic when I declared my intention of hiring a diver and making a search in the sand which had filled the hull of the vessel.

If I spent all my fortune I would have done it, and to the amazement and delight of the townspeople the work was commenced. They fancied I was seeking for some treasure or other. So I was, the greatest treasure that a man can ever seek, the woman he has loved and lost.

Only a very few were in the secret, the men who did the work, of course, and the authorities who permitted it, and the good folks of the town wondered not a little.

At length they came to me, their work was done, and laid what they had found at my side as I sat.

"Do you know these, sir?" the men asked.

A mass of wet, pulpy something which might have been a woman's dress at some time but which was unrecognisable now, a flat gold bracelet which I knew in a moment, for I had bought it for my darling on the day when she promised to be my wife, and a little brooch.

"They were all together, sir," the man who had found them said, quietly. "There's no mistake, it's a lady."

"But how did you get this off?" I asked, touching the bracelet. It fastened with a padlock and was locked.

The man turned away with a sort of shiver before he answered.

"It was easy enough, sir," he said. "You wouldn't need to wonder if you'd seen what we did."

I knew then that what they found was not my Mabel, only a hideous mass of something that wore her clothes, and was only fit to be buried out of our sight, not in Grange Harbour, but by the side of the mother who had mourned her so deeply, and whose loving heart had broken over her loss.

No trace of anyone else was found in the ship, though I learned years afterwards when I had long despaired of having any light thrown on the mystery, that Mr. and Mrs. Freemantle had changed their course and gone to Brest, whence they took passage in that very ship for England.

The fact of the chief officers of the ship having been drowned, and a year having elapsed before I asked any question about the vessel, accounted for my not being able to gather any particulars, but when I heard of the Freemantles having been aboard of her I understood it all. They were not known to anyone most probably, and only the three persons who could not speak, two being dead and the third injured, could have told me what had become of them.

The story is a forgotten one now. The ship has been broken up for years and nothing remains to tell of that disastrous wreck save my sad memories and the stone in Kensal Green Cemetery which covers the mother and daughter and records that Mabel Beechcroft was drowned

at Grange Harbour in the wreck of the French steamer *Esperance*.

FILIAL AFFECTION.

DURING the reign of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, an officer of distinction, named Untorp, by an unaccountable mishap suffered himself to be despoiled of certain important state papers, the presence of which in the hands of the enemy worked great mischief to the king—or, at least, it prevented him from making a very important movement on the result of which he had much depended. The poor man knew that death must be his fate, he had known it from the first. The king was grieved, but the example must not be lost. Untorp had slept on his post when he should have been awake. He could not—he would not—deny it. He was tried, and convicted, and condemned to death.

General Untorp had a son, Eric, two-and-twenty years of age, who had graduated with honour at the highest military school in the realm, and had already won distinction by his dash and bravery. This son went to the military judge, and said to him:

"Look ye: My father has grown old in the service, and his wife clings to him with a love that is a part of her very life. And he has other children—daughters—who lean upon him, and look to him for every joy and every comfort. As for me, I have as yet made no strong ties beyond those of the dear old home. I shall not be missed. Let my father live, and let me die in his place. Thus the law will have its victim, and my family will be blessed."

At first the judge could not believe the youth to be in earnest; but when satisfied upon that point, he could only tell him that it was beyond his power to grant the strange request; and he sent him away sorrowing.

On that very day the judge, when he had thought the matter over in all its bearings, took horses and posted off to see the king, whom he found at eventide on the day following. And he told to his royal master the story of Eric Untorp.

Gustavus Adolphus was deeply moved. He sent for the young man at once, and listened to the appeal from his own lips. The boy did, really and truly, wish to die for his father. The king did not give a definite answer then; but Eric had seen him in tears, and that gave him hope. Surely, if the great monarch could be thus deeply moved, something good might be hoped for.

At the close of the interview Gustavus bade the youth to remain near at hand, and await orders.

And then the king overhauled the case of Untorp, and examined into it more particularly. There was occasion for blame, but not an atom—not a thought—of treason. There had been no wilful neglect.

In the end General Untorp was pardoned and restored to his former rank and employment. And to Eric the monarch said:

"Young man, you have shown to me a spirit that I admire—a soul of truth that I can rely upon—and a fountain of love and devotion that I would gladly draw from to my own good. Do you think you could serve your king as faithfully as you would have served your father?"

"Sire," answered Eric, with tears in his eyes, and a choking in his voice at the beginning—but a voice as clear as a flute as he proceeded—"thou hast given back a dear father to our beloved home; and I do not speak falsely when I tell thee that, next to my God, I love my king; for he now is more to me than a father! he is the preserver of our family!"

Gustavus Adolphus placed Eric Untorp upon his staff, first in a purely military capacity; but ere long he made him his confidential secretary, to become, and to remain while they both lived, the one friend and counsellor above all others.

DEAN STANLEY.

THE Very Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D., F.R.S., Dean of Westminster, Chaplain to the Queen and the Prince of Wales, and Deputy Clerk of the Closet, died at The Deanery on the 18th ult. This beloved, eloquent, and gifted divine was born December 13, 1815, the second son of Edward, Bishop of Norwich, and nephew of Sir John Thomas Stanley, seventh Baronet, who was created Lord Stanley of Alderley in 1839. He was educated at Rugby, under Dr. Arnold, and passed a most brilliant University career at Oxford. He obtained a scholarship at Balliol College and gained the Newdigate prize (for his English poem "The Gipsies"), a First Class in Classics in 1837, the Latin Essay prize in 1839, and the English Essay and Theological prizes in 1840. In that year he was elected Fellow of University College. From 1850 to 1852 he acted as secretary of the Oxford University Commission, from 1851 to 1853 was Canon of Canterbury, from 1856 to 1864 Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, and in the last-named year was appointed Dean of Westminster in succession to the present Archbishop of Dublin. In 1871 the University of St. Andrews conferred on him the degree of LL.D., and elected him their Lord Rector in 1875.

In literature Dean Stanley has won a very high position. His "Life of Arnold," published in 1844, takes rank amongst English classics; then followed Stanley's "Stories and Essays on the Apostolic Age," a "Memoir of Bishop Stanley," "Historical Memorials of Canterbury," "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church," "Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey," besides many theological works and sermons, all indicating the great power and accomplished mind of the writer. He also contributed to the "Quarterly" and "Edinburgh Reviews," and to other leading periodicals.

Dean Stanley married, December 22, 1863, Lady Augusta Bruce, long the trusted and loved friend of the late Duchess of Kent, as well as of her Majesty, daughter of Thomas, Earl of Elgin, the well-known collector of the Elgin marbles, but was left a widower, without issue, March 1, 1876.

Not long after the Prince Consort's death, Dr. Stanley accompanied the Prince of Wales on his Royal Highness's journey to the Holy Land, and on the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage was the chosen representative of the bridegroom's Church.

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

SINGULAR TENURE OF CASTLE GUARD.—Much land in Kent and other counties is held of Rochester Castle by perfect castle guard. On St. Andrew's Day, old style, a banner is hung out at the house of the receiver of the rents; and every tenant neglecting then to discharge his proper rent is liable to have it doubled every time the tide passes the adjacent bridge during the time it remains unpaid.

SINGULAR CORNISH CUSTOM.—Every butcher carrying on trade in the Hundred of Penwith, that is in the towns of Penzance, St. Ives, etc., by an ancient regulation is required to give a marrow bone each at Christmas to the poor prisoners confined in the jail of the said Hundred. This is now commuted into a payment of one shilling each, though the jail no longer exists.

THE ENGLISH NAVY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—In 1572 the merchant shipping of England was said to be one hundred and thirty-five vessels, some of them of five hundred tons. The navy of Queen Elizabeth consisted of thirteen public ships of war; the rest were borrowed from her subjects. In 1588 the number of mer-

chant ships was one hundred and fifty tons each. The navy of the queen, which encountered the Spanish Armada, contained about forty public ships and the rest were borrowed for the occasion from her subjects in all the maritime towns which possessed any shipping.

A CURE FOR THE TOOTHACHE.—Among the strange fancies held of old with regard to trees was the following.—That five ivy berries beaten small and made hot with some rose water in the rind of a pomegranate, being dropped into the ear, on the contrary side, will cure an aching tooth.

SANCTUARY.—The old law of sanctuary was, that any person guilty of felony might fly to a church or consecrated place, and there remain in security for forty days, after which he was allowed no food. Within the forty days he was at liberty to abjure the realm, which was to submit to perpetual banishment by forswearing the kingdom, upon a public confession of guilt before the king's coroner or bailiff at the church door. Sanctuaries have long since been abolished by statute. When any person fled to a sanctuary the village in which it was situated was charged with the custody of such person until he left the kingdom under abjuration, or was brought to justice. The old reports and authorities refer so often to amerancements levied for escapes of felons from sanctuary that we may plainly gather this privilege of sanctuary gave frequent occasion to extortion and abuse.

ANCIENT CORONATION CUSTOM.—At the coronation of Edward the First Speed says: "For the more royal celebration of this feast, and in honour of so martial a king, there were five hundred great horses let loose, every one to take them for his own use or could."

FAMILY LONGEVITY.—August 6, 1657, at Haddington, in Scotland, were married Alexander Maitland and Catherine Cunningham. The ages of nine of their children amounted to 738 years.

CORONATION SWORDS.—There are three swords carried before the sovereign at the coronation, besides the sword of State, the first of which, named Curteen, or Curtana, belonged to Edward the Confessor, and has been used at the public inauguration of our sovereigns ever since. The length of the blade is now thirty-two inches; originally it was much longer, but it has been broken off at the point to betoken Mercy, justly reckoned the brightest jewel in the crown. Edward III., when he was crowned, Feb. 1, 1327, was the first of our kings who, in the exertion of the prerogative of mercy, proclaimed a general pardon, which has since been practised by succeeding monarchs. The second sword is pointed, though somewhat obtuse, and is denominated the Sword of Justice to the Spirituality; its blade is forty inches long and one and a-half broad. The third, or Sword of Justice to the Temporality, is sharp at the point, of the same length as the former, and one and three-quarters in breadth.

THE INVENTION OF SHOES.—Sandals were most common among the Orientals. As they were mere soles of wood or leather fastened to the foot with strings, they were no protection from the dust; hence arose the hospitable practice of washing the visitors' feet—a practice so much insisted upon by public opinion that if anyone passing out of a house beat the dust from his feet, it showed that they had not been washed, and left on the house the reproach of inhospitality, which was the deepest of all dishonour. The Greeks and Romans added the mocasson or buskin to the sandal—the former was worn by tragic actors. The shoe makes quite a figure in English history. In the time of Richard I., says Stow, "began the detestable use of piked shoes, the toes being tied to the knee with chains of silver or gilt." Edward IV., says the same historian, ordained "that no man wear shoes or boots having toes passing two inches long; no peakes of boots or shoes to pass that length on pain of cursing by the clergy."

EXTRAORDINARY PRICE GIVEN FOR GLOVES.—At the sale of the Earl of Arran's goods, April 6th, 1750, the gloves given by Henry VIII. to Sir Anthony Denny were sold for £38 17s. 9d.; those given by James I. to his son, Edward

Denny, for £22 4s.; the mittens given by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Edward Denny's lady, £25 4s.; all of which were bought for Sir Thomas Denny, of Ireland, who was descended in a direct line from the great Sir Anthony Denny, one of the executors of the will of Henry VIII.

SUPERSTITIOUS CUSTOM.—In several parts of Suffolk the following singular custom is resorted to upon the master of the house dying where an apriary exists. No sooner has the domestic calamity taken place than a messenger is dispatched to inform the busy inmates of the hive of the sorrowful event; this is done by tapping gently against their straw dwelling and saying, "Your master is dead!" a presentiment existing in the minds of their owners, if this custom remains unfulfilled, that the industrious little labourers will forsake the hive, never to return.

THE CASTLE OF VINCONNES.—Here, in 1617, was confined the Prince of Condé, and forty years after, the great Condé became a tenant of the building in which his father had been incarcerated. The celebrated Count Mirabeau also had the misfortune to be imprisoned four years within the walls of this edifice, during which he wrote the admirable letters between Gabriel and Sophia.

NO CEREMONY.—In the church register at Leamington was found the following entry:—"In the year 1736, Samuel Baldwin was interred without ceremony." It appears that the deceased had left strict orders to be buried incognito, to thwart his wife, who had declared she would dance over his grave.

EARLY MIRACLE PLAY.—The first exhibition of this kind specified by name was called "St. Catherine," and, according to Matthew Paris, had for its author, Godfrey, the Norman, afterwards Abbot of St. Alban's, who was sent to England by Abbot Richard to take upon him the direction of the school belonging to that monastery; but, coming too late, he went and taught at Dunstable, where he caused his play to be performed about the year 1110 and borrowed from the sacrist of St. Alban's some of the ecclesiastical vestments of the Abbey to adorn the actors. Latterly these entertainments were called "Mysteries," because the most mysterious subjects of the holy history were selected.

SINGULAR OATH.—The following curious oath was administered in the Isle of Man: "By this Book and the holy contents thereof, and by the wonderful works that God has miraculously wrought in Heaven above and in the earth beneath in six days and seven nights, I, A. B., do swear that I will, without respect to favour or friendship, love or gain, consanguinity or affinity, envy or malice, execute the laws of this isle justly betwixt our sovereign lord the king and his subjects within this isle; and between party and party, as indifferently as a herring's backbone doth lie in the middle of the fish."

STATUTE OF HENRY THE SECOND.—In the reign of this king a statute was made compelling every man who held a knight's fee to keep by him a coat of mail, a helmet, and a shield and spear; and that every man possessed of ten marks sterling should keep a coat of mail, a steel cap, and a lance.

AN EXTRAORDINARY PIECE OF ORDNANCE.—The Flemings in 1382 possessed a most dreadful piece of ordnance. It was, says that king of chroniclers, Froissart, fifty feet long and threw wonderfully large stones. Its report was heard five leagues by day, and ten by night; and its noise was so immense that one would have thought that all the devils in Hell had a share in it.

CARDINALS' HATS.—The wearing of red hats by cardinals was first ordained by Pope Innocent the Fourth, in the reign of our Henry the Third. The reason of this singular appointment is unknown.

THE WEARING OF AMULETS.—These appendages have been used by all nations as a charm or preservation against mischief or disease. The Persians adopted, from the Egyptians, the custom of suspending to the neck small cylinders, adorned with figures and hieroglyphics. The Jews were extremely superstitious in the use of them. The Greeks called them phylacteries. Among the early Christians amulets were made

of the wood of the cross, or of ribbons, with a text of scripture written on them. The Agnus Dei of the pope are the amulets worn by Catholics. In the sixteenth century we have amulets worn round the neck against pestilence, made of arsenic, and warehoused in large quantities. An item noticed in Gage's Hengrave says, "A hundred weight of amulets for neke XXXs IIIJd." Though amulets are now fallen much from the repute in which they were anciently held, yet, notwithstanding the progress of learning, there is not any country in Europe, even at this day, where the lower order of people do not believe in some charm.

ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.—The Collegiate Chapel of St. George, Windsor, is one of the most chaste and elegant specimens of pure English architecture in the country. It was commenced by Edward III., but has been rebuilt and enlarged by various sovereigns, including Henry VII., of whose period the prevailing architecture of the interior is. This interior is indeed magnificent. The groining of the roof and the vaulting of the nave, choir, aisles, and transepts, are distinguished by their elegant forms and numerous ramifications. The interior of the choir is very splendid, having the banners, etc., of several Knights of the Garter. The splendid stained glass window is from a design of West.

FACETIÆ.

"ROUNDING ON HIM."

GRUMBING HANSOM CABBY (to little Wagstaffe, who has overpaid him for a three-mile-and-a-bit journey): "Rather a long half-crown, ain't it?"

WAGSTAFFE (innocently): "Long? Oh, dear no. Quite round."

[Exit, chuckling.]

Punch.

A FRUITFUL SESSION!—When it dies full of age but empty of honour, hated by most people and respected by none, they may write this over its obscure grave, by the kind permission of the Irish Members—"It reformed receipt stamps."

Punch.

"GLADSTONE seems remarkably fond of Tennyson!"

"He ought to. Didn't the Laureate write a poem on his place?"

"A poem?"

"Yes, to be sure. 'Enoch Hawarden.'"

Punch.

DIALOGUE AT DERBY.

("Cheese and butter are natural foes.—'Times.'")

CHEESE: "Bosh! you're a fraud, a failure—vile and utter."

BUTTER: "You rank impostor! Prove it, if you please."

CHEESE: "You're tallow, caul-fat, everything but butter."

BUTTER: "And you decidedly are 'not the cheese.'"

Punch.

LITERAL DEFINITION.

"CAN you tell me what's o'clock, sir?"

"Certainly; a species of exaggerated clock."

"Oh!"

Judy.

RESULT OF THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CRICKET MATCH.—A great crowd.

Judy.

THE PRESIDENT'S HEALTH.—What we all wish to hear from America, "Latest bullet-in-bullet out."

Judy.

THE GENTLE HINT.

SMALL BOY (to visitor): "Here's your hat and umbrella, and you'd better go now, or mamma will be cross as she was the last time you called and you stopped such a time."

[General joy.]

Judy.

A DESCENT FOR A DISSENTER.—Spurgeon's jokes: Witty-schism.

Judy.

Pig-gish.—May people whose sense of smell

is inaccurate be said to suffer from tricky-noses (trichinosis)?

Judy.

THE GERMAN CLERK—A DRAMA OF MINCING LANE.

ACT I.

MR. TOMSON: "Mr. Meyer, if anyone calls for me, please tell him I am gone to the docks."

MEYER: "Yes, sir."

[Exit Tomson. End of Act I.]

ACT II.—ENTER SHMIT, CREDITOR.

SHMIT: "Mr. Tomson, please?"

MEYER: "Mr. Tomson is gone to ze dogs, sir."

[Tableau.]

Judy.

VESTMENT FOR CANNON BALL.—Gun-cotton.

Judy.

HAMILTON: "Did my voice fill the room, Tom?"

TOM: "Yes, it filled the room—at first."

HAMILTON: "But afterwards?"

TOM: "Well, afterwards—it emptied the room!"

Moonshine.

A MANTEL PIECE.—One that is shelved.

Moonshine.

QUERY.—Is not an etymologist a gnat-uralist?

Moonshine.

NEW BOOK.—A new book has been published entitled "All about the Land Question." Singularly enough its author is Mr. G. C. Cattle. The relative appropriateness of things is here observable, for what so well adapted to discourse upon Land as Cattle?

Moonshine.

COMMON PEOPLE.—Visitors to Wimbledon.

Moonshine.

THEATRICAL.—It's not surprising when there are so many "wings" about the stage of a theatre that there should be so many "fys."

Moonshine.

A PRINT DRESS.—A newspaper libel suit.

Moonshine.

A (K)NIGHT ERRANT.—A burglar.

Moonshine.

ACROBATIC.—The best somersaults: Epsom salts.

Moonshine.

"CONTRA" BAND OF WAR.—The Peace Society.

Moonshine.

HOPS TELL A FLATTERING TALE.—A correspondent writes from Canterbury to say that the hop-plantations, which are very numerous in that district, afford evidence that the prospect of planters is "a very hopeful one." We are afraid that spelling is this correspondent's weak point; he evidently means to say that the prospect is very "hop-full."

Moonshine.

FORTUNATE.—The "Daily Telegraph" of July 15 reports, under "Last Night's Telegrams," that a lady was savagely attacked by a dog, which seized her nose between its teeth, biting it in a most savage manner before it could be beaten off. The paragraph is headed "Nun-eaton." We are truly glad to hear that the attack stopped short of cannibalism.

Moonshine.

A LOVE (E)NOT.

SHE: "I do wish him near, because I love him, father."

HE: "Because you love him near, I do wish him farther."

Fun.

MEM.—Walking any distance during the hot weather not only causes you to fall lame, but it makes your collar limp also.

Fun.

"POLLY"—SYLLABIC MONOLOGUE.—A poll-parrot's talk.

Fun.

FOR THE COMMON—"WEAL."

A PHILANTHROPIC M.P. has bought a calf, and is anxious to procure a fitting home for it in some populous part of the City, where he can keep it with a view to dispensing its lymph to all who may apply. Why not seek a stall for it at the Mansion House? Surely the calf would be the right thing in the right place, at what after all is our London "Hotel de Veal?"

Fun.

NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.

In case your cook persistently insists on dishing your curry up too mild, it is a "comparatively safe plan to call in to your assistance the aid of a currier!"

Fun.

SIR W. LAWSON'S LATEST (WARRANTED GENUINE).

"That cool refreshing summer drink—gin-sling. Treat it in a summary manner, and sling the gin out of the window!"

Fun.

ROBERT THOMPSON, a butcher, has been committed for trial at Manchester on a charge of having stolen a Bank of England note. A lady, named Raw, asked him to change a £5 note, inadvertently handing him a £50 note. She received £5 in gold as change, and subsequently found out her mistake. Mrs. Raw (an appropriate name with which to approach a butcher) considers that she was "done."

Fun.

The green turtle is one that allows itself to be caught.

An unpleasant trip—Down two flights of stairs.

BOXIANA.

The boxology of nations presents itself somewhat after this fashion:

Germany—the cartridge-box.

France—the band-box.

America—the ballot-box.

Italy—the opera-box.

Russia—the ear-box.

England—the jury-box.

It may be explained as to Russia that it is not unusual for an officer to box a subaltern's ears on parade.

Funny Folks.

"FLOW ON, THOU SHINING RIVER."

SILLERMAN wants to know what is the difference in colour between the "Silver Thames" and the "Argent-Tyne?"

Funny Folks.

"WHO READS AN AMERICAN BOOK?"—Why, the English author, to see if it is not his!

Funny Folks.

"ARMS AND THE WOMAN."

It is becoming the fashion—though the fashion may not be becoming—for ladies to have their armorial bearings richly worked upon the left sleeve. Rather reversing the usual order, isn't it, to wear their "arms" outside their sleeves?

Funny Folks.

ANTIQUÉ FORM OF ADDRESS TO THE "LION OF THE SEASON."—"Give ye good den."

Funny Folks.

MORE INJUSTICE TO IRELAND.

SHE: "Any news, darling?"

HE: "Well, yes; another horrible murder."

SHE: "Oh, where?"

HE: "Well, at a place called Ballagh Cross Road, near Mullingar."

SHE: "Oh! Only another of those Irish ones! Why, you gave me quite a turn!"

Funny Folks.

"MELTING MOMENTS."

BURNS, with his usual poetic fire, has fitly described one of those boiling days such as we have had lately as a "Simmer's afternoon."

Funny Folks.

WYE-DE OF THE MARK.

A HEREFORD lady was summoned the other day for horsewhipping her recreant lover on the Wye Bridge, because he had "broken her peace of mind." She was bound over to keep the peace.

Funny Folks.

"MOST FOUL!"

HENNETT suggests a suitable Shakespearian inscription to put over the door of a fowl-house. "They have their egg-sits and their entrances."

Funny Folks.

THE SCOPTIC'S REMARK ON THE IDEA OF A COMPLETED CHANNEL TUNNEL.—"Tell that to the sub-marines."

Funny Folks.

THE MOVING IMPULSE OF MINING SCHEMES.—The pro-"motor."

Funny Folks.



[IN BLACK AND WHITE.]

MY MAY AND I.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

"I NEVER meant to be false to you, Cyril; I never intended to deceive you," she said, raising her pure, sad face to mine.

But the iron of jealousy had entered my soul, and raged like unto a demon there; and I smiled a hard, bitter smile, as in cuttingly cold, even tones I bade her rise from her knees, where she had flung herself, imploring me to believe her.

"It is a cruel, cruel mistake. I never loved him. Oh, I never loved him!" she repeated, again and again.

But my faith had fled, and an involuntary shudder shook me as I gazed at the fair face—the anguish of the glorious eyes—the quivering lines of pain that were traced about the curved lips. Ah, no! Mercy was not for such as she, who had taken my life into her tiny, ruthless hands until, like a child, she had wearied and tired, throwing away the love of my manhood that had palled upon her fickle fancy. And I turned savagely away, for fear that in my mad fury, as the torturing thoughts winged their way to my heart, I should forget I was a man and strike the

woman who had caused my faith in the truth and purity of her sex to wither and die like a flower of the field.

"For the love of the dear God above us, Cyril, do not turn away from me like that! I have been true to you always, always! Oh, Cyril, it is your little May, your wife, who tells you this!"

But I caught her fiercely by the arm, never heeding in my insane passion the pain I knew my hand occasioned as it clenched the soft, delicate flesh, though she bore it without wincing.

"Girl," I cried, "you lie! Think you I have not proof of your guilt? Think you I know not your reason for wedding me? Bah! I confront you with the evidence of your duplicity!"

And I held a letter with her own name traced in the pretty, running hand I knew so well at the end of the page.

"Mon Dieu!" she whispered, softly. "It is my writing."

"Read!" I cried, triumphantly. "Read!"

But even I was not prepared for the horror—the bewilderment—the utter despair—that blanched the girlish features as she glanced down the open letter. She lifted her little white hands as if in prayer, and her face presented the appearance as of one belonging to the dead.

"Cyril," she said, and the sweet voice

had a strained, far-away sound, "I never wrote that!"

I laughed, and my laugh was that of a demon.

The slight form swayed, her breath came in hurried gasps, and I heard the petition "God forgive him!" forced from the set, agonised mouth. But I turned and strode from the room, leaving my wife lying prone upon the floor, with the life-blood welling up and trickling a red, terrible stream from the pure lips.

I was mad—mad! I actually laughed as I went in search of a maid to assist her mistress; nor did I even stay to discover if my wife—my dainty, delicate little May—was in danger.

May God forgive me! I knew not what I did.

Leaving the home that I had prepared with such loving care for my bride, I went to my lawyers and bade them arrange a division of property; for I would not leave her penniless, thrown powerless and helpless upon a hard, cold world. Then on the spur of the moment I engaged passage in a steamer that sailed the following day for America. And as I witnessed from my position upon the deck parting scenes of relatives and friends, and the grief of a wife who, regardless of the surging crowd around, had flung herself weeping into the arms of her husband, a hard, sceptical smile parted my lips as I wondered how deep that sorrow was, and how long it would last, or if it were only surface grief, scarcely to be remembered on the morrow.

I think I had forgotten there was a God.

As the noble vessel ploughed its way through the billowy waves the passengers became more accustomed to their surroundings; acquaintances and friendships were formed; but I held rigorously aloof from all, and no one attempted any advances—with the exception of one man, whom I heard spoken of as George Denbigh, the husband of the lady who had exhibited so much grief when separating; but I rejected his overtures with such savage abruptness that he, too, was repelled for a time.

One evening, owing to the lateness of the hour, the deck was almost deserted, and I stood leaning against the railing when I felt a hand laid upon my shoulder, and the voice of George Denbigh disturbed my sad reflections.

"My friend," he said, "you are in trouble."

Man as I was, the tears started to my eyes at the sound of a sympathising word coming to me, isolated and alone by reason of my great sorrow; but, being ashamed of my momentary weakness, I turned on him angrily.

"Leave me alone!" I cried, fiercely.

For answer he linked his arm through mine in a quiet, masterful way, saying:

"Take a walk with me on the deck."

And, subdued by a stronger will than my own, I obeyed. We paced back and forth for half an hour, conversing upon indifferent topics; but his low tones, holding a sort of mesmeric charm that few men possess, exercised a soothing effect over my whole system, and instinctively I felt drawn toward my companion.

From that night George Denbigh and I were firm friends, though with rare delicacy he sought my society but seldom, and with wonderful intuition joined me only when I most longed for a friendly voice.

The last night of our voyage we spent the evening together, and he drew me on to speak—as I never thought I should to any human being—of my wife. Moodily flicking the ashes from the end of my cigar I unfolded my history.

"Years ago," I began, "my father and mother died; thenceforth my home was with my uncle, a brother of my father's. I finished my education at college, and by my guardian's desire went abroad, remaining away a number of years; sometimes travelling, sometimes pursuing my studies as an artist. In the meanwhile my uncle adopted a child, the daughter of an old friend who, dying, left her penniless. I heard how passionately fond the old man became of the bright, sunny-haired girl, and I was glad he had some one to enliven the gloom that pervaded the old mansion.

"Shortly after my thirtieth birthday had been attained I received the intelligence of my uncle's death and hastened home, too late, though, by some weeks to be present at the funeral. The will was read the day following my arrival; and then, for the first time, I saw the girl he had adopted—a fair, fragile creature of about eighteen, clad in deep mourning. I had heard of her as being extremely pretty, but was scarcely prepared for the great beauty that met my first careless glance—the delicate features appearing as if carved in marble, so white and pure were they, the small face framed in by masses of magnificent, sunny-hued hair, and glorious brown eyes, liquid in their unfathomable depths. My uncle divided his property between his ward and myself on condition of a marriage between us. If either one refused, the whole fortune was to revert to the other; if both declined, it was to endow a charitable institution.

"It was an easy matter for me to comply with the terms of the will, for I had loved beautiful May Surrey from the first moment of our meeting, and for months I laboured to reproduce her face upon canvas. At length, when I thought her love was mine, I asked her to be my wife. Turning her fair face to me, she said, simply:

"I love you, Cyril."

"You can imagine the deep joy I experienced. After that the marriage preparations were hurried on, for there was no occasion for delay, and I wanted May all to myself. One day I asked her:

"Have you ever loved anyone but me?"

"She flushed crimson, but replied:

"You are the only one I ever cared for."

"But I longed for further assurance, and inquired once more:

"Have you never, even in the slightest degree, felt an affection for anyone else?"

"No, no, no!" she cried, vehemently. "I never loved anyone but you."

"And I was satisfied."

"We were married, and for a year life seemed one dream of bliss. I could never do enough for my darling; every luxury money could purchase was hers, everything that love could suggest was done, and I was fool enough to think she loved me in return. But one day there came to our home a cousin of my wife's who had been away for three years in Madrid. I thought May was not quite her bright self during their first meeting, but she professed to be not feeling well, and I believed her. The cousin, Harold Courtney, remained some weeks with us; I was conscious of experiencing an unaccountable dislike to him—for he was very gentlemanly, and apparently straightforward—and I fancied my aversion was shared by May, though we never alluded to the subject.

"One day I sauntered into a billiard-room for a few minutes and stood watching a game that was being played. Two gentlemen were standing near me, and desultory snatches of their conversation reached my ear, until my attention was completely arrested by hearing one of them remark:

"I was told to day that Cyril Clinton's pretty wife used to be engaged to that cousin of hers who is visiting them now."

"Hush!" his companion rejoined, as he glanced quickly in my direction, and then they walked away.

"I did not pay much heed to the remark, though it troubled me a little now and then. A few days after Harold Courtney and I were walking through the park that surrounded my home, when he told me he had received some reliable information concerning a horse he had been backing pretty heavily, handing me a letter to read. Judge of my horror as I unfolded the sheet to find it was in the handwriting of my wife, commencing 'My darling Harold, and glancing at the end of the page I read, 'Your loving May.'

"The remark I had heard a few days previous flashed across my mind, and I inquired sternly the meaning of the words. He started, and apparently was much confused.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I have given you the wrong letter."

"I could have throttled him as he spoke, but with a mighty effort restrained myself and demanded an explanation.

"Leaning against a tree, cool, careless and handsome, he replied:

"Don't excite yourself, Clinton. It is altogether too hot work this weather."

"But I was furious; and then in his debonaire way he told me 'I had been rather long in discovering what nearly everyone else knew, namely, that my pretty wife and he were former lovers; in fact, were that even yet.'

"Only my desire to hear the truth prevented me from striking the scoundrel to the earth, and I commanded him in Heaven's name to inform me why I had been deceived into marriage.

"Ah!" he replied, with a mocking laugh, 'you don't suppose ma belle cousin cared to lose a large fortune for the sake of a poor devil like me, do you? I was obliged to go to the wall.'

"Do not think, Denbigh," I said to my companion, who had been listening attentively, "that I condemned Mrs. Clinton without further proof. Her cousin, upon our return to the house, produced a number of letters, all breathing the warmest love, and lamenting her marriage as a necessary evil; letters also that were written after our wedding, such as no woman who had promised to love, honour and obey her husband should write to another man. I read them through one by one, then bade Harold Courtney leave my house and never cross the threshold again. With his customary sang froid he wished me good afternoon, desiring me to make his adieux to Mrs. Clinton; half an hour later he drove away in a cab. And then I sought my wife, whom I confronted with the story of her engagement. She became deathly white, acknowledging the truth of the accusation at once, but denying that she ever cared for him.

"Cyril," she said, 'two years before I met you Harold Courtney visited at your uncle's; I was only sixteen, almost a child, with no companions of my own age. It seemed a new life to me when Harold came, and when he proposed that we should contract an engagement I laughed and consented, thinking—child-like—that it would be great fun. We kept our secret to ourselves, but I never felt more than cousinly regard for him; and six months later, when he received an appointment in Madrid, I requested him to release me from our engagement, for he wearied me, and I had already begun to dislike him. He complied with my wish, but swore he would be revenged upon me for casting him off. After your uncle's death I met you, and understood, for the first time in my life, what love meant. One day you asked me if I had ever cared for anyone else; I told you no, and it was the truth. I lacked the courage to confess the folly of my girlish days, knowing how jealous you were, and I thought it would be easier to tell you after our marriage; but even then I put it off from day to day, dreading to disturb the harmony of our lives, until Harold appeared; and it was then an hourly regret that I had not told you, for he persecuted me with his hateful attentions and I could not appeal to you. But, Cyril, I never cared for him in my life.'

"Denbigh, how could I have faith in her, when in my possession there was proof of her guilt in a dozen letters? I told her so, and she fell on her knees imploring me to believe her; but I held a letter before the fair, false face, and bade her read. Thrown off her guard, she cried, softly, 'Mon Dieu! It is my writing;' though a moment after she denied that she ever wrote it. I left her lying in a dead faint upon the floor, and the next day departed from home with the determination never more to look on the face of my beautiful, perfidious wife. Do you wonder that I am morose, gloomy, sceptical of the goodness and purity of woman, that I have lost faith in man?"

"But not in God; remember, friend, that He ruleth over all," broke in the deep, low tones of my companion.

The following day George Denbigh and I left the ship in company, and, as it mattered little where I went, we remained together until his business transactions were accomplished and I stood on the quay shouting a farewell as he

leaned over the side of the steamer that was to convey him back to wife and home.

For two years I travelled wherever fancy led me, making few acquaintances and still fewer friends; so completely had the current of my life—the very tenor of my existence—been changed by the knowledge of one woman's faithlessness.

At length I found myself in Rome—Rome, that I once thought May and I would explore together.

Sometimes I went on long pedestrian tours; occasionally I made a sketch of some picturesque little group, or copied from a painting in the Schiavre Palace; but all in my own desultory manner, and holding rigorously aloof from other artists.

One evening as I entered the hotel, weary from a day's long tramp, I was met by the padrone, who informed me that a gentleman—a sick signore—wished to see me.

"Impossible!" I said. "You have made a mistake; it is not I whom he wishes to see."

"Si," he replied; "it is you, Signor Clinton, he asks for."

And he led me to a room where the sick man lay, closing the door and leaving us alone. Drawing near to the bedside I looked down at the stranger, who raised his head from the pillow at my approach and, illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun, I saw the face of the man whom I had hoped never more to meet upon earth—Harold Courtney.

I started back with a gesture of repulsion, but he stretched out his hand and bade me stay.

"For," he said, in a weak, trembling whisper, "I have something to tell you—a confession to make."

Once more approaching, I signed for him to go on. With quick, gasping breath he addressed me.

"Cyril Clinton," the broken voice commenced, "I have been lying here ill for two months; when I heard from the padrone that a rich English gentleman, a Signor Clinton, had arrived, I prayed that some lucky chance would call you away, for I dared not risk an encounter with the man I had wronged; but you remained, and I became worse, until now the doctor apprises me I cannot live."

Here the tones faltered and died away, but by an effort he collected strength to continue, though there was a struggle for breath, and the words came in hesitating, broken gasps.

"Years ago, when May was only sixteen—almost a child—we were engaged, but she never cared for me, never loved me, and in about six months begged me to release her. I did so, but swore to be revenged on her for casting me off. I visited your home for that purpose; and when I found how she repulsed every attention it confirmed me in my determination. I have unusual skill in imitating handwriting, and, obtaining a specimen of your wife's, I succeeded in producing a number of letters that would defy the closest scrutiny. When I handed you one in the park it was no mistake on my part, but a preconcerted plan; you know how well my scheme succeeded. Cyril Clinton, I give you my word—the word of a dying man—that your wife was always true to you, as pure as any woman living. I could not die with this burden of guilt weighing down my soul unconfessed. Do with me as you will—I lie here completely in your power."

But I sat with my face bowed in my hands, stunned, bewildered. My May, my wife, my pure little blossom, innocent! Wronged, misjudged, forsaken, by the one who had vowed to protect and trust! It was a bitter moment, in spite of the knowledge that my darling had been true to me always.

The man by my side stirred uneasily, and whispered, faintly:

"It's growing dark all around—Cyril, forgive me—before I die."

I flung myself upon my knees and prayed Heaven, as I never prayed before, to send me strength to pardon. And presently, rising to my feet, I laid my hand upon the damp, cold brow of the dying man and said, solemnly:

"As I hope for forgiveness for my own sins I forgive you."

There was one long-drawn, trembling sigh, and Harold Courtney was dead.

I saw the body interred in its lonely, foreign grave, then started on my journey home, impatient and longing to see my darling—to entreat her forgiveness—to clasp her in my arms once more and gaze into the pure face again—to feel her warm breath on my cheek and know I was still loved. Oh, May, my beautiful wife, how eager I was to see you! How interminable the voyage appeared!

Immediately after reaching London I repaired to the office of my solicitors and applied for information concerning May—if she still lived in the old home or resided elsewhere. It was a cruel blow when they told me that Mrs. Clinton had refused to accept one penny of my money, and had gone—they knew not whither.

I spent weeks in following up every clue that I thought would lead to my darling, but it was all in vain, and, loth though I was to employ such means, I at length engaged the services of a private detective—promising, if he should succeed in his search, to make him independent for life.

Six months went by, and only disappointments greeted our efforts, and my heart grew sick with hope deferred. Then I sought out George Denbigh, with whom I had kept up an irregular correspondence.

"Somehow, Clinton," he said, after I had informed him of May's innocence, "I could not help thinking all along that your wife, as you described her, could not be as guilty as you imagined." And with never-flagging energy he joined in our search.

At length, while following up a supposed clue that took us to Paris, we discovered one link in a sad chain of evidence, and received from the keepers of the morgue a description of a young girl found drowned a year before. There could be no doubt, no mistake. The likeness was too faithful—even to the tiny scar on the delicate wrist.

My God! The agony I suffered in the months that followed! My beautiful May dead—never to know how I longed for her! How my soul cried out in its anguish for a glimpse of her dear face! Never to know that I would lay down my life for the sweet privilege of one moment in which to pray her forgiveness. Oh, it was bitter, bitter to wake from a bright, delusive dream, where I had felt her soft arm around my neck, her gentle lips pressed to mine. Agony to awake to the never-ending longing—the cruel, dreary, awful barrenness of life.

A year passed away, and I was in London again, never having lost the consciousness of my loss, when one evening Denbigh and I were wending our way along a retired street; though the church clocks had only struck eight o'clock it was quite dark.

"Hark!" Denbigh cried. "What was that?"

We listened, and again there came a faint, muffled cry for help.

With one impulse we darted forward, and as we turned the corner of a street that intersected the one we were in we almost stumbled over two ruffian-looking men, one of whom held a lady in his grasp, while the other was rifling her pocket. A short scuffle ensued, in which the man I had attacked made off down the street at the first opportunity; but George held on valiantly to his opponent, determined to land him in the police-station; and between us it did not take long to master the scoundrel.

Still retaining my hold on the man's collar, I turned and inquired of the lady if she were injured. At the sound of my voice she started violently, bent slightly forward, giving one rapid glance into my face, and before I had recovered from the dazed bewilderment that stunned every faculty she flitted around the corner. In a moment I started in pursuit—for it was May, my wife, not dead, but alive; and the tale of her death a case of mistaken identity—but the little dark figure had vanished amid the gloom; and wearied and disheartened, after half an hour's search I returned to George, whom I

found resting against a lamp-post at the corner where our recent encounter had occurred, calmly smoking a cigar.

"You are a nice fellow to rush off like that," was his greeting, ruefully concluding, "leaving me to be knocked down by that villain, while he made his escape."

"George," I groaned, leaning heavily against the side of the house for support, "that lady was my wife."

"Cyril, dear boy," he said, compassionately, "you are labouring under some hallucination; that fight has upset you."

"It is May," I reiterated. "Denbigh, I saw her face as distinctly as I see yours."

"Well, well, old fellow," he replied, soothingly, "never mind; come home with me and lie down for a while."

And I was conscious that he thought my brain was a little bewildered. So it was, but not in the way he imagined.

From that night my efforts were redoubled; I never rested, never wearied; May was alive, and success must crown my search. With that beacon-star before me I could have borne the labour and disappointment of years; for I felt that some day, even if it were twenty years hence, we would meet, and I would go down on my knees—as she had once knelt before me—and pray for forgiveness for the cruel wrong done her.

At last I knew I was on the right track. May had left London and gone to a village about seventy miles distant. My heart beat high with hope as the train slackened at the small station, for the end of my journey appeared very near; and as I walked through the quiet streets of the little town I scarcely dared think of our meeting, for fear that my great happiness would dethrone my reason; and as I knocked at the door of a diminutive cottage where it had been discovered May was staying, a powerful effort was required to stifle the tumultuous throbbing of a heart whose deep joy and thankfulness seemed too much for it to bear. To the woman who opened the door my trembling lips could hardly frame the inquiry:

"Is Mrs. Clinton within?"

"No," she replied; "Mrs. Clinton went away for good this morning, and I haven't any idea where she's gone to."

I turned away, declining with a gesture when the woman compassionately asked:

"Won't you come in and rest awhile, sir? You do look ill, to be sure."

There was a train waiting at the station, and I jumped in, never noticing, in my great disappointment, which direction it was going in, nor knowing, as we went rattling on, that I was being carried further and further from home.

It was nearly seven o'clock when the great crash came; daylight was turned into darkness, and the cries of wounded and dying rent the air. The accident was a terrible one, for the train had pitched down a steep embankment, and many an unprepared soul was called suddenly away that night to meet its Creator.

With the exception of a few slight bruises, I was uninjured, and joined those who were working for the rescue of the poor, unfortunate creatures lying crushed and imprisoned beneath the broken and shattered carriages.

We worked long and untiringly, moving the heavy timbers, lifting gently and tenderly the moaning sufferers, until the night closed around us and the darkness was illuminated by the rising moon and lanterns glancing hither and thither. At last we removed from among the debris one silent, motionless little figure, with the blood trickling across the white forehead.

"Oh, my God!" I moaned. "May!"

Yes, it was May, white and still.

"Hush!" the voices murmured around me. "It is his wife, and she is dead."

I would suffer no one to touch her but myself, and held the quiet form close to my heart, with the pale, cold face against mine, her blood wetting my cheek, until the welcome lights of a succouring train were seen approaching, and I carried her into a carriage, where sympathising strangers gathered around; but I waved

them back, wanting none—only to be alone with my dead; and they draw away, awed by a terrible sorrow.

An hour passed by, and still the work went on. Ah! what was that? The faint beating of a heart—a tiny fluttering of an eyelid—the trembling of a lip.

Oh, I thanked Heaven, I thanked Heaven! My May's soul had returned from its flight; it had paused on this side of the bourne from which no traveller returneth, and bearing the sad cry of the stricken heart bereaved of its mate had winged its way to earth again, freighted with a great pity.

It was no longer the empty tenement I held in my arms. How we laboured to bring back the light to the brown eyes—what careful means we employed to restore the trembling life—to coax warmth into the cold form—to woo the colour back to the white, quiet face! And presently the glorious eyes opened and gazed around with the look of a spirit returning from a higher, purer, holier sphere, until they rested on the features of the one who loved her more than all else.

A wondering joy dawned in the brown depths, and the one word "Cyril!" fluttered from the tender lips. Bending, I kissed the sweet mouth, and the sunny head nestled against my heart, while a great peacefulness stole over the tired face as the long lashes drooped on the soft cheek, like those of a weary child at rest.

My May and I were reconciled.

In the year 1788 there were only 29 sheep in Australia. At the present time there are no fewer than 62,000,000.

The New York courts have awarded \$500 dollars (£700) damages to a little girl of that city for the loss of a piece of her nose from the bite of a monkey that had escaped from the Bowery Museum.

It is stated that the directors of the South-Eastern Railway Company have under their consideration a project for the construction of a new dock at East Greenwich.

To those who are making rhubarb-jam and are flavouring it with lemon-peel, it may not be known that orange-peel, pared thinly and free from the white, is a most agreeable flavouring; and by preserving one quantity of rhubarb with lemon-peel and another with oranges, two different jams can be produced out of the same material.

The Siberian plague has broken out in the provinces of St. Petersburg and Novgorod, and horses and cattle are being carried off in large numbers, many persons having also been attacked. A St. Petersburg correspondent telegraphs that a high official left recently for the infected districts to take steps to arrest the spread of the epidemic.

ELECTRICITY will soon be sold in cans or in jars, which will only require the addition of a little acid before using.

Good times are probably coming for those who love silken apparel, and plenty of it, for a new silkworm, which feeds, like some of the Japanese species, on oak-leaves, has been discovered in the mountains of Nevada. It is called *Bombyx Querous*, and it does not eat the thread in emerging from the cocoons. The silk is strong and the worm hardy, living in the open air, and requiring neither aid nor shelter.

It is said that there is a European lady in Japan who has collected no less than seven hundred teapots of different patterns and kinds, though scores of typical shapes are not yet included in her assortment.

THERE are many ways of celebrating marriage, but perhaps the most bizarre ever heard of was the union of Mr. Frank Sheppie and Miss Louisa James, at Bad Lands, Dakota, where the clergyman officiated by telegraph from the town of Bismarck. The proceedings were perfectly en règle, the questions and answers being written, telegraphed, and responded to, concluding with the usual benedictions. Responsible persons witnessed that the bride and bridegroom answered duly at one end of the wire while the clergyman did his duty at the other.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

NEVER relate your misfortune, and never grieve over what you cannot prevent.

To know how to serve is to have learned one of the lessons of divine wisdom.

THE power of eloquence is sometimes superior to military force.

No rank can shield us from the impartiality of death.

THE life is at last what the days have been. Let the children, therefore, look after the days—one day at a time—and put into each one something that will last—something worth doing, without remembering, worth imitating by those who follow us.

It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty; or to seek power over others and lose power over one's self.

WE cannot conquer fate and necessity, but we can yield to them in such a manner as to be greater than if we could.

THERE is nothing like courage in misfortune. Next to faith in Providence, a man's faith in himself is his salvation. It is the secret of all power and success. It makes a man strong as the pillared iron, as elastic as the springing steel.

STATISTICS.

CITY DAY CENSUS.—From the report of the City day census presented at a meeting of the Local Government and Taxation Committee by Mr. W. Lawley, C.C. (the chairman), and Mr. B. Scott (the Chamberlain), it appears that the total resident occupiers and persons employed are 260,670, as against 50,526 night population according to the Imperial return. The mercantile and commercial population in 1881 is 210,144, as against 170,133 in 1866. The decrease in night residents since 1871 is 24,371. The increase of persons resorting to the City in a day of sixteen hours since 1866 is 59,896, and the increase of rateable value since the same period is £1,427,626.

POPULATION OF THE TRANSVAAL.—A map of the Transvaal appended to the recent Blue Book on South Africa shows the populations of the various provinces of the territory. They are as follows:—Zoutpansberg—Kaffirs, 364,250; Europeans of Dutch origin (Boers), 654; Europeans of non-Dutch origin, 160; in Waterberg the numbers are respectively, 174,045, 714, and 50; Rustenburg, 26,300, 5,370, and 485; Marico, 13,200, 1,967, and 209; Bloemhof, 39,570, 874, and 90; Potchefstroom, 1,500, 6,517, and 1,065; Pretoria, 13,125, 5,859, and 1,810; Heidelberg, 1,500, 4,181, 820; Middleburg, 3,125, 1,885, 195; Standerton, 2,185, 1,143, 180; Leydenberg, 123,300, 1,286, 292; Wakkerstroom, 7,500, 1,869, 200; Utrecht, 5,150, 1,510, 260; or a total of 774,930 Kaffirs, 33,739 Boers, and 5,316 Europeans other than Boers.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RAISIN CAKE.—One cup sugar, one cup raisins, one-half cup butter, one-half cup sweet milk, one cup and a half flour, whites of two eggs beaten to stiff froth, two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder. Beat sugar, milk and butter to a cream.

MINUTE PUDDING.—One pint of milk, one of water, nine tablespoonfuls of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, two eggs. Set the milk into a basin of hot water, and when it comes to a boil add to it one pint of boiling water. Have ready the flour, made into a smooth paste with one cup of milk, and mix with this paste, after they are well beaten, the two eggs. Now take the basin in which the milk and water are and set upon the fire; let it boil up once, and then stir in the thickening; beat it well that it may be smooth,

and cook three minutes longer. Serve with vinegar sauce.

LEMON SAUCE FOR SWEET PUDDINGS.—Rind and juice of one lemon, one tablespoonful of flour, one ounce of butter, one large wineglass of sherry, one wineglass of water, sugar to taste, yolks of four eggs. Rub the rind of lemon on to some lumps of sugar, squeeze out the juice, and strain it, put the butter and flour into a saucepan, stir over the fire, and when of a pale brown add the liquid; crush the sugar, stir into the sauce, which should be very sweet. When these are well mixed, and the sugar is melted, put in the beaten yolks; keep stirring the sauce until it thickens, when serve.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE.

I CAME to the door of the school-house,
Where once I a scholar had been,
The master sat silently reading,
The children were out on the green.

I saw where I sat in my childhood,
The prints of my knife on the desk,
The black-board so quaint and old-fashioned,
Where oft I had written my task.

Above it my name had been printed,
The letters were visible still,
While she who thus thoughtlessly traced them
Is dust in her grave on the hill.

The beeches so tall and so stately
That lengthened their shade on the floor,
Half-covered with moss and worm-eaten,
Still stand by the old, oaken door.

But those who have swung from their branches
And danced with delight at their feet—
The friends that I knew in my school-days,
Oh! when—and, oh! where shall we meet?

Not here in this valley of shadow,
But there in God's beautiful land,
May we who were scholars together
Reach forward the welcoming hand.

I turned from the school-house in sadness
And silently wended my way
Across the old paths of the play-ground
Where children were busy at play.

I heard the low murmur of voices,
The ripple of laughter between,
The snatches of song, but the echo
Of those I once sang on the green.

I saw not the forms of the players,
My eyes were overflowing with tears,
To think of the scenes that had vanished,
The joys of my earlier years.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE accounts of the recent National Fisheries Exhibition at Norwich show a surplus of £1,500.

THE King of Spain is expected to visit England this year.

It is calculated that if all the cigarettes smoked in a single year in France could be placed in a line, end to end, the series would reach a length of more than two million kilometres, and would suffice to go five hundred times round the circumference of the earth!

In these days, when the tunnelling of the Channel is decided to be only a question of money, a new Thames tunnel seems a very trifling enterprise. Such a scheme is suggested by the local authorities at Greenwich, and the Metropolitan Board have referred it to a com-

mittee for consideration and report. It is cooling in this weather even to think of a subaqueous promenade.

THE fish torpedo which disappeared in the river Thames at Woolwich during an experimental trial of a new torpedo boat on the 10th of June has been caught opposite the Royal Arsenal, and close to the spot where it had vanished. It had partly buried itself in the mud.

AN eccentric old gentleman in Lincolnshire, aged 83, is, it is stated, so firmly convinced of the approaching end of the world that he has ordered an immense balloon to be made for his convenience, by means of which he hopes to witness the destruction of the planet without sharing the fate of its inhabitants. He will take with him in his ascent tinned provisions, brandy, soda water, treacle, and other creature comforts!

THE Empress of China, who died recently, was only forty-five years of age, and the period of Court mourning for her will extend through twenty-seven months. The names of this lady were Ts'u-Hsi-Tuan-Yu-K'ang-Yi-Chao-Yu-Chuang-Ch'eng, a tolerable list, but after all not much longer than the one bestowed on many European princesses by their godfathers and godmothers.

A FEW dates show that Presidents of a Republic are as little spared by assassins as kings. In 1869 a President was assassinated in the United States, in 1872 the President of Peru was the victim; in 1873 the President of Bolivia fell under the assassin's knife; the same crime occurred in 1875, again in 1877, and last in 1881.

CURE FOR BITE OF MAD DOG.—The "Piedmontese Gazette" of May 8th, 1817, gives the following cure as successful against the bite of mad dogs: Hydrochloric (liquid oxygenated muriatic acid) used internally as well as externally, the wounds caused by the bite of the dog being washed with it. This substance will destroy the hydrophobic poison, even when used some time after the date of bite. Numerous cures effected have been authenticated in the great hospitals in Lombardy.

STRAWBERRIES are being eaten in Paris with salt and pepper, oil and vinegar, "Une salade de fraises."

A WOMAN at Devizes was the other day stung by a bee, and died within a few hours.

THE site selected for the national monument to the Earl of Beaconsfield in Westminster Abbey is next to the monument of Sir Robert Peel. The spot chosen is one of the finest positions in the Abbey.

THE freaks and fancies of idle fashionable women are wonderful. New York believes for some years past have gone about attended by pug dogs, collies, Maltese, or toy terriers, but these canine pets are now all sent to the right about, and the latest craze is for tiny children, just able to walk, and most elaborately dressed. Young girls borrow these little creatures from their mothers, and if there be not a child of the correct age among their friends and acquaintances, hire the offspring of poor people, curl, dress, perfume, and then parade them as their own property.

THE proposed visit to England of the Yankee Tichborne claimant will, it is expected, be abandoned, owing to the number of discrepancies which have been discovered in the claimant's narrative.

A TRAVELLER gives a hint which is valuable to those who thirst. It is a mistake, he says, to suppose that the sensation of thirst is the prompting of the stomach to be relieved. Thirst is a tongue complaint. During eight years in America and eight years in South Africa the traveller found it was the practice to retain water in the mouth several moments, then to throw it out, and take another mouthful. The tongue, roof of the mouth, and even the throat being moistened and refreshed, a tablespoonful of water, with the chill thus removed, may be swallowed, and the thirst is quenched. Whatever the heat of the body, the coldest spring water, it is said, may be used with impunity.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

PERSUASION.—Amongst the preparations enumerated which you say you have used for the hair with more or less success—"principally less"—we do not find mentioned Oldridge's Balm of Columbia. Try this and report result. You can get it at any chemist's, or from 22, Wellington Street, Strand.

S. F.—To make a varnish for waterproof goods, let a quarter of a pound of India rubber, in small pieces, soften in half a pound of oil of turpentine; then add two pounds of boiled oil, and let the whole boil for two hours over a slow coal fire. When dissolved, add again six pounds of boiled linseed oil, and one pound of litharge, and boil until an even liquid is obtained. It is applied warm, and forms a waterproof coating.

N. N.—The substance used for gumming stamps is made as follows: Gum dextrine, two parts; acetic acid, one part; water, five parts. Dissolve in a water bath, and add alcohol, one part.

E. A. B.—To make rhubarb wine for medicinal purposes, take of sliced rhubarb, two and a half ounces; cardamom seeds, bruised and husked, half an ounce; saffron, two drams; Spanish white wine, two pints; proof spirit, half a pint. Digest for ten days and strain.

O. L.—Bi-carbonate of soda is a good remedy for ordinary headache. Take a teaspoonful in a third of a tumbler of water.

B. C.—A cheap and beautiful green colour for walls can be prepared in the following manner: Dissolve a portion, according to shade required, of Roman vitriol in boiling water, which pour upon a mixture of lime and water, the lime being first finely powdered. Mix it well in a pail, and lay it on the walls with a painter's brush. Melted glue added to this composition, or plasterer's size, will render it more durable. Still better is a varnish carried over it, rendering it damp-proof.

E. H.—According to mythology, Pegasus was a winged horse belonging to Apollo and the Muses.

W. S.—The pyramids of Egypt were built of bricks. The height of the highest is 460 feet.

E. S.—Albany is only the modernised form of "Albain," the old name for the Highlands of Scotland.

P. C.—The Egyptians believed that after 3,000 years of living the lives of different animals the soul would again seek its own body.

O. W.—There is a tradition among sailors that the petrel was named from St. Peter, from his having walked on the sea.

W. O. M.—Lead pencil marks cannot be rendered indelible, but if the lines are washed over with a clear solution of quarter ounce of gum arabic in six ounces of water they will not rub off readily.

G. A.—To put on a gloss when ironing shirts: Raw starch, one ounce; gum arabic, one drachm; white of egg or blood albumen, half ounce; soluble glass, quarter ounce; water, sufficient. Make the starch into a fine cream, dissolve the gum in a little hot water, cool and mix it with the albumen, and beat up the mixture with the starch liquid. Then add the water-glass (solution) and shake together. Moisten the starched linen with a cloth dipped in this liquid, and use a polishing iron to develop the gloss.

F. M. G.—Raisins are dried grapes, the best varieties being the Malaga, muscatel or "sun raisins." These are dried upon the vines, the stem to each bunch when ripe being twisted or partly severed. The grapes soon shrivel by the evaporation of the water they contain, and become sweeter by the concentration of pulp. The common kinds of raisins are prepared by drying the ripe grapes, after they are picked, either in the sun or in heated rooms, and while they are drying dipping them in a lye of wood-ashes and barilla, to every four gallons of which is added a pint of oil and a handful of salt. This causes the saccharine matter to exude and form a coating of the varnish.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

OUR READERS will be gratified to learn that we have made arrangements with a highly gifted and Popular Author for the production of a

NEW SERIAL STORY,

which will be commenced Next Week in No. 955.

ADELA, FLO and MAY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Adela is twenty, medium height, fair. Flo is nineteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes. May is eighteen, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be good-looking.

MAUD and FLORENCE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Maud is twenty-three, tall, fair, good-looking. Florence is medium height, fair, good-looking. Respondents must be tall, good-looking.

LOVING MAN, twenty-nine, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

EMMA, ANNIE and EDITH, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Emma is nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Annie is eighteen, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Edith is seventeen, medium height, fair, fond of home.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

I stood alone in the twilight,
When evening shadows play,
While perfumes, sweet from the meadow,
Bring me welcome close of day.
Welcome to those that are happy,
And welcome to those who mourn;
Symbol of life's fleeting moments,
A leaf from its volume torn.
Thus, standing before her picture,
My thoughts were bridging the years,
To that parting in injured pride,
When filled were her eyes with tears.

I passed out into the gloaming,
And left the tapestried hall,
To seek and ask for a pardon
From one who was all in all.

Again I stand by that picture,
After years have rolled around,
Beside me now is the woman
That healed that deeply scarred wound.
Laughs as I tell her my story.
Of my thoughts, both grave and gay,
Then asks if my heart is as sad
As on that propitious day.
Her loving words I cherish now,
As in the days when she was fair,
Though o'er her face time's hand is drawn,
And silver-grey her hair.
I'll tell you the woman I wed,
Since you do not seem to know,
I wedded the one that I loved
In the years of long ago.

SPRINGFLOWER, twenty-eight, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between twenty-eight and thirty with a view to matrimony.

KIT and DOLL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Kit is twenty-one, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Doll is nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Respondents must be tall, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

STYD, twenty-six, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady about twenty-three.

GARDEN DAISY and DAMASK ROSE, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Garden Daisy is fair, of a loving disposition. Damask Rose is medium height, dark, good-looking.

AGNES, NELLIE, ETHEL, and EMILY, four friends, would like to correspond with four young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Agnes is twenty, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Nellie is eighteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing. Ethel is nineteen, tall, fair, fond of music and dancing. Emily is a widow, tall, dark; a widower preferred.

ALICE, eighteen, tall, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be between twenty-four and thirty.

BASHFUL WILL, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady about seventeen or eighteen.

VIOLET and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-one. Violet is nineteen, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing. Lily is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and singing.

E. J. M., nineteen, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about seventeen.

RED ROSE, MOSS ROSE and MAIDEN BLUSH, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen.

Red Rose is eighteen, short, dark hair, brown eyes, fond of home and music. **Moss Rose** is seventeen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of music and singing. **Maiden Blush** is nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing.

EIGHTEENTH LIGHT DRAGOONS, twenty, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and dancing, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about nineteen with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

INDLE is responded to by—May, eighteen, medium height, dark hair, grey eyes, good-looking, fond of home.

TEP by—Tinnie, twenty-one, fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

SALLY by—Ben, twenty-five, tall, dark, good-looking.

ALMA by—Andrew H., twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of music.

INDLE by—Kate, nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music.

MAIN ROYAL by—Mimi, nineteen, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition.

TOX by—Lilian, twenty-two, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

INDLE by—Cecilia S., seventeen, medium height, fair, hazel eyes, fond of home and music.

A. B. by—Maggie, tall, good-looking, fond of home and music.

MEXICUS by—S. M., thirty, tall, fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

A. B. by—Jenny, nineteen, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

CHARLEY by—May, twenty, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

TEP by—Celia, twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of home and children.

ARTHUR by—Carrie, seventeen, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of children.

LIONEL by—Lily, seventeen, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of home and music.

LILLIE L. by—Edward S., twenty-three, tall, fair, brown hair, good-looking.

FLASHING LIGHT by—Flo, medium height, black hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

BASHFUL JON by—Alice, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

DIRECTOR OF NAVAL TELEGRAPHY by—Laura, tall, fair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition.

CRYPTOGRAPH COMMUNICATOR AND HELIOGRAPH DELINEATOR by—Annie, tall, dark hair and eyes.

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